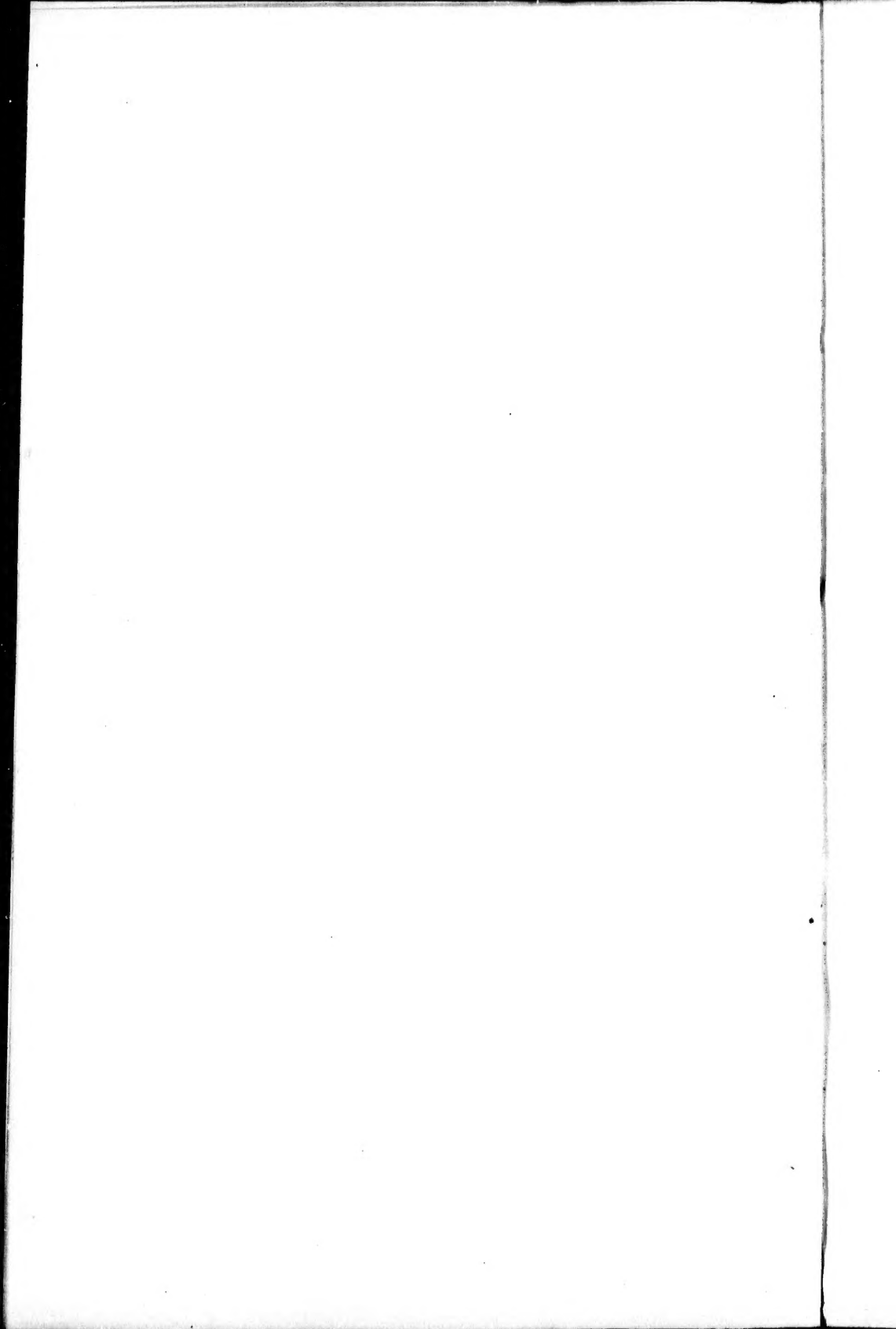




OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
REPORT
OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE
OF THE
House of Lords,
RELATIVE TO THE
TIMBER TRADE.

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BY A BRITISH MERCHANT.  
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PREFACE.

AMONG the various classes of cases which present themselves to the deliberations of the Members of the Legislature, few are so liable in their nature to involve those on whom this heavy responsibility lies, in much of honest doubt and perplexity, as those connected with the Commercial Policy of the Country. Considerations directed at one time towards Revenue, at another towards the fair and reasonable protection of the natural Interests of the Country, when placed in collision with those of other nations (measured by much the same rule of nature and reason, that leads the father of a family to provide for his own children before those of his neighbours), seeking again, to let Commerce run, as much as may be, a free

and unrestrained course, that the energies of Commercial enterprise may be as little cramped as possible,—may well lead to doubt and hesitation in the minds of Legislators. In the upper House of Parliament, in particular, are these difficulties liable to no small measure of augmentation, arising from an unavoidable want of familiarity with the practical details of the subject on the part of the Noble Members of that branch of the Legislature.

Unavoidable as these difficulties are, and a part only of that want of perfection inherent in all human institutions, the Author of the following pages cannot but express his humble concern, at having perceived that, in the deliberations on the present state of the Timber Trade, those leading considerations which, in the midst of all the obscurity and delusion attempted to be thrown round the subject, stand as beacons on the hills, to guide the course of the Politician and the Legislator, seem to have been wholly disregarded.

If, with this impression strongly on his

mind, he shall be found to have addressed himself with considerable anxiety, to the removing the erroneous opinions on which he conceives the Report of the Lords' Committee to be founded ;—to the shewing that neither in their theory, are those opinions sound and well formed, nor in their practical consequences, capable of producing the effects proposed ; he trusts that the earnestness with which he has gone into the discussion, and the remarks which have grown out of it, will find an apology in the importance of the question itself, and not be deemed in any way disrespectful towards the Committee, whose labours he has thus ventured to examine.

OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, on the subject of the Timber Trade, having been made, the Opinions it contains, and the System it recommends, are before the Public, and are open to the discussion of persons who, concurring in, or dissenting from, those opinions, are anxious for the adoption or rejection of that System. It may, therefore, be permitted to one, long attentive to the subject matter of that Report, and who firmly believes, that its recommendations, if acted upon, would be productive of consequences ruinous to our Shipping,—detrimental to our Colonial and Manufacturing Interests,—and very injurious to the Nation at large,—to submit for the consideration of their Lordships, and the other Members of the Legislature, the grounds upon which such opinions are founded.

In the performance of this task, it is proposed

to proceed, as much as the nature of the subject will admit, in the order of their Lordships' Report.

Upon a question of such magnitude, in a national point of view, it could hardly have been doubted that the *power* and *security* of the British Empire would have been the primary objects to which their Lordships' attention would have been directed; and, consequently, that the very first point taken into consideration would be, how far the British Shipping and Colonial Interests, upon which that power and security so mainly depend, were likely to be affected by a contraction of the Timber Trade with the North American Colonies; yet the only notice which their Lordships have taken of those valuable appendages of the British Empire, and main support of our Commercial Marine, is to be found in the following three paragraphs.

Page 1.—"The encouragement afforded to the
 "Importation of Wood from the British North
 "American Colonies, by the imposition of heavy
 "Duties on Wood from Foreign States, is of comparatively recent date, and does not appear to
 "have formed a part of the Commercial or Colonial Policy of the country previous to the late
 "War."*

* Although the encouragement to the Importation of Wood from the North American Colonies, by the "imposition of heavy

Page 6.—" There can be little doubt, that any
 " material diminution of the Duties on Foreign
 " Timber, would almost immediately lead to an
 " increased demand of that article for most pur-

Duties" on Foreign Wood, may not be of ancient date, yet the following preambles to the Acts 3 and 4 of Anne, c. 10; 8 Geo. I. c. 12; and 5 Geo. III. c. 45, shew that our ancestors were fully sensible of the policy of affording special encouragement to the former, as a protection against the very circumstance which, as stated by their Lordships, led to the imposition of the high Duty on Foreign Wood in the year 1809: viz. " An
 " apprehension that great difficulty might be found in deriving
 " the usual supplies of Timber from that quarter, not only for
 " the general purposes of domestic use, but more particularly
 " for the purposes of Ship-building," viz.

3 and 4 Anne.—" Whereas the Royal Navy and the navigation of England, wherein, under God, the wealth, safety, and strength of this kingdom is so much concerned, depends on the due supply of stores necessary for the same, which being now brought in mostly from *foreign* parts in *foreign* Shipping, at exorbitant and arbitrary rates, to the great prejudice and discouragement of the trade and navigation of this kingdom, may be provided in a more certain and beneficial manner from her Majesty's own dominions. And whereas her Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America were at first settled, and are still maintained and protected at a great expense of the treasure of this kingdom, with a design to render them as useful as may be to England, and the labour and industry of the people there, profitable to themselves: and, in regard to the said Colonies and Plantations, by the vast tracts of land therein lying near the Sea, and upon Navigable Rivers, may commodiously afford great quantities

“ poses of Building, and enable the Countries
 “ which produce it, but more especially Sweden and
 “ Norway, very greatly to increase their consump-

“ of all sorts of Naval Stores, *if due encouragement be given*
 “ for carrying on so great and advantageous an undertaking ;
 “ which will likewise tend not only to the further employment
 “ and increase of English Shipping and Seamen, but also to
 “ the enlarging, in a great measure, the trade and vent of the
 “ woollen and other manufactures and commodities of this
 “ kingdom, and of other of her Majesty's dominions, in ex-
 “ change for such Naval Stores, which is now purchased from
 “ Foreign Countries with *Money or Bullion* : and for enabling
 “ her Majesty's Subjects in the said Colonies and Plantations to
 “ make due and sufficient returns in the course of their Trade.”

8 Geo. I. c. 12.—“ Whereas great quantities of Wood and
 “ Timber, and of the Goods commonly called Lumber—here-
 “ inafter particularly enumerated (that is to say), deals of
 “ several sorts, timber-balks of several sizes, barrel-boards,
 “ clap-boards, pipe-boards, or pipe-holt, white boards for Shoe-
 “ makers, boom and cant-spars, bow-staves, capravens, clap-
 “ holt, ebony wood, headings for pipes, and for hogsheads
 “ and barrels, hoops for Coopers, oars, pipe and hoghead
 “ staves, barrel-staves, firkin-staves, trunnels, speckled wood,
 “ sweet wood, small spars, oak-plank, and wainscot, or some
 “ of them, have usually been imported into this Country from
 “ Foreign Countries, at excessive rates or prices, especially in
 “ time of War, and Foreigners have, thereby, found opportu-
 “ nities to export the coined Monies of this Realm ; and, it is
 “ well known, that the said commodities being of the growth
 “ and product of his Majesty's Plantations in America, may
 “ be furnished from thence, if due encouragement was given
 “ in that behalf : Be it, therefore, enacted, &c.”

tion of British produce. As this circumstance, however, could not take place without diminishing the demand for Canada Timber,* it must, in some degree, affect the profits of the Capital now vested in Saw-mills, and other Machinery, in Canada, which has been stated by a Gentleman interested in that Country, to consist of from £100,000 to £150,000. It could not be considered as affecting the interests of the Canadian Landholder, as the value of the Tim-

5 Geo. III. c. 45.—“Whereas the improving and securing the Trade and Commerce of the British Colonies and Plantations in America is highly beneficial, not only to the said Colonies and Plantations, but to Great Britain : and whereas it may, on this account, be proper to encourage the importation of Deals, Planks, Boards, and Timber, from the said Colonies and Plantations, whereby his Majesty's Royal Navy, as well as Ships employed in the Merchant Service, may be furnished with such materials at more reasonable rates than at present ; and great sums of Money, at present expended among Foreign Nations, for the purchase of such materials, may be saved, &c.”

The encouragement afforded to the importation of Wood from the North American Colonies, by the imposition of heavy duties on Wood from Foreign States, which their Lordships' Report speaks of, is therefore, only a change in the mode of effecting this great and worthy object of our national policy.

* Would it not, also, in like proportion, diminish the demand for British Manufactures for Colonial consumption ?

“ ber sold at Quebec does not exceed by much
 “ the expense and labour of procuring it for Ship-
 “ ping, and the Landholder himself gets little or
 “ nothing for the Timber.”

Page 7.—“ The Committee would by no means,
 “ however, suggest, for the adoption of Parlia-
 “ ment, any sudden alteration of the existing sys-
 “ tem, by which Wood, the growth of Canada,
 “ might be entirely excluded from the means of
 “ competition in the British Market. And they
 “ therefore submit, that under all the circum-
 “ stances in which this Trade has originated, and
 “ been carried on, it may still be expedient to
 “ compensate to the Canadian Merchant and Im-
 “ porter, by such limited duty as may be necessary
 “ for that purpose, the difference of freight and
 “ transport, so as to bring their Wood into the
 “ British Market on equal terms with Wood of
 “ the same dimensions, the growth of other Coun-
 “ tries.”

Thus it appears, that all idea of affording pro-
 tection and encouragement to our North American
 Colonies, as an integral part of the British Empire,
 peopled by Englishmen, of whom a large propor-
 tion have been encouraged to emigrate from the
 Mother Country, by the prosperity to which their
 increased participation in the Timber Trade has
 led; and who, by the Navigation Laws, are re-

stricted to the use of British Ships, and, with some few exceptions, to the consumption of British Commodities (of which they take from the Mother Country to the amount of nearly Two Millions Sterling annually), is put so entirely out of the question, as not to be deemed worthy of the slightest consideration or remark, in the whole course of the Report: all that the Committee appear to think just and necessary being, to guard against any alteration of the existing system, of so sudden a nature, as *entirely* to exclude Wood, the growth of Canada, from the means of competition in the British Market!

It remains to be shewn, how far the measures proposed by the Committee are calculated to avert even that *sudden* ruin; meanwhile it may be observed, that were it not that their Lordships express their desire to avoid such a consequence, and anticipate the benefits of an extended export of Manufactures to the North of Europe, it might be imagined, that their direct object was to annihilate the British Timber Trade at a blow, and so to work a serious injury to our Navy, for the benefit at once of Foreign Shipping, and of the Foreign Timber Trade, as well as of a few Commission Merchants, or Agents, in this Country.

To place Timber, imported from North America, upon equal terms in this Market, with that from the North of Europe, particularly of Norway, allow-

ance should not only be made for the difference of Freight, but also for the prejudice of Centuries in favour of the latter ; which prejudice their Lordships appear to have adopted in the fullest extent ; for how can it be contended, that the two descriptions of Wood would be brought into the British Market on equal terms, provided the Duty upon Baltic Timber were limited to an amount, equal only to the difference of Freight, when it is, at the same time, stated, that Canada Timber is “ more soft and less durable,” and, therefore, of very inferior quality ?

A Table is annexed to their Lordships' Report (*pages 144 and 145*), “ which they are assured “ may be relied on, of the Prices of Timber from “ each Port, distinguishing the Duty, Freight, “ Charges, net Proceeds, and Prime Cost.” This Table having been furnished by those who stand opposed to the British American Timber in this question, may, at least, be considered as not likely to be unfavourably constructed for the Interests of the Foreign Timber Merchant : it affords, notwithstanding, the most convincing testimony, that the making the difference of Freight, the only measure of the difference of Duty between the Timber of North America, and that of the North of Europe, would effect—not the gradual and partial,—but the instant and total, annihilation of the American Timber Trade. The following data, extracted from this Table, will speak for themselves.

It appears that Memel Timber, though burthened with a Duty of 3l. 5s. per load, leaves for net Proceeds, in the London Market, 1l. 3s. 9d. per load; that Riga Timber, though paying of course the same Duty, leaves for net Proceeds, 1l. 4s. 6d. per load;—but that Canada Timber, at the same moment, though wholly free from Duty, leaves for net Proceeds only 5s. 4d. per load.*

If, then, the Duty just quoted, of 3l. 5s. per load, is to be reduced to 1l. 15s. per load (being “the difference of Freight and Transport” in the cases cited), how is the Canada Timber to maintain itself in the Market against the Foreign Timber for a single week?

Again, with respect to Deals, it appears that, although paying the existing duty,

	£.	s.	d.	
Memel Deals leave, for net proceeds....	1	18	6	per Load.
Petersburgh	1	14	6	
Swedish	1	7	0	
Norway	1	4	8	
But that Canada Deals leave only.....	1	1	3	

* See evidence of Mr. John White, p. 82.

“Supposing there was a difference of duty in favour of the American Timber, just such as to compensate the difference of freight, are you of opinion there would then be any use of American Timber?”

Answer.—“Certainly not: I think a few American Deals might find their way here as back carriage.”

If the Duty on Norway Deals (between which and Canada the competition chiefly lies), is to be reduced from 3l. 17s. 1d. per load, to 2l. 1s. 9d. by the rule proposed, how can it be pretended that the Importation of Canada Deals can be supported for a moment? The consequences of such a measure, beyond all question, would be, to effect the immediate destruction of the British Colonial Timber Trade;—to turn the great bulk of the Ships and Seamen engaged in it out of employ;—and mortally to injure all the great national interests dependent upon them; for how, we repeat, under such disadvantages, and the prejudice against Canada Timber (which their Lordships' Report is calculated in no small degree to increase), could the Trade sustain a competition with that of the North of Europe?* and, if experimentally exposed to such a competition for a single season, with the facilities for glutting the Market by the Importation of such a quantity of Timber within a short time, as would suffice for the consumption of many years, which are afforded by our Bonding System,—is it not equally certain, that the destruction which would thereby be brought upon those interests, would not only be inevitable, but also irremediable?

* Canada Red Pine is not quoted, because (as the Report states), a very small portion of the Import from that Country consists of that article.

CHAPTER II.

THE notion that the British Marine, and, therefore, that the British Colonies deserve but little, or no consideration of protection, appears to be one of the most fatal which the British Legislature can adopt; it is, however, the fashion of the present hour, especially with the political economists, and advocates for a free and unrestricted Foreign Trade, to deride as antiquated and absurd, the maxims of our forefathers, who considered the *power and security of the Country* as matters of primary importance; and the protection and encouragement of our Commercial Marine, as indispensable requisites to those objects.

It is now discovered, that the interests of this Country will be best promoted by sacrificing our Colonies and Shipping to the Trade and Shipping of our friends the Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, &c. but this idea is no less opposed to the opinions of British writers and Statesmen, the most celebrated for true wisdom and the love of their Country, for centuries past,—than to that of an eminent Statesman of another country, whose judgment in this

particular, from his acknowledged ability, and the peculiar situation in which he stood, may be thought worthy of some attention.

Monsieur Talleyrand, in his celebrated Pamphlet, published during the Consulate of Buonaparte, speaking of the contemplated acquisition of Louisiana, says,

“ Will England suffer France to possess herself
 “ of the most effectual means of prosecuting Wars
 “ to a different issue? *Their Navy and their Com-*
 “ *merce* are, at present, all their trust. France
 “ may add Italy and Germany to her dominions
 “ with less detriment to England, than would fol-
 “ low from her acquisition of a Navy, and the ex-
 “ tension of her Trade. *Whatever gives Colonies*
 “ *to France*, supplies her with Ships and Sailors,
 “ Manufactures and Husbandmen. Victories by
 “ land can only give her mutinous subjects; who,
 “ instead of augmenting the National force by their
 “ riches or numbers, contribute only to disperse
 “ and enfeeble that force; but the growth of Colo-
 “ nies supplies her with zealous Citizens; and the
 “ increase of real wealth and effective numbers is
 “ the certain consequence.

“ What would Germany, Italy, Spain, and
 “ France, combining their strength, do against
 “ England? They might assemble in millions on the

" shores of the Channel, but there would be the
 " limit of their enmity. Without ships to carry
 " them over ; without experienced mariners to na-
 " vigate these ships, England would only deride
 " the pompous preparation. The moment we leave
 " the shore, her fleets are ready to pounce upon
 " us, to disperse and destroy our ineffectual arma-
 " ments. *There* lies their *security* : in their insular
 " situation and their Navy consist their impreg-
 " nable defence. Their Navy is, in every respect,
 " the offspring of their Trade. *To rob them of*
 " *that, therefore, is to beat down their last wall,*
 " *and to fill up their last moat. To gain it to*
 " *ourselves, is to enable us to take advantage of*
 " *their deserted and defenceless borders, and to*
 " *complete the humiliation of our only remaining*
 " *competitor. The trade which enriches England,*
 " *lies chiefly in the products of Foreign climates."*

After this alien and weighty testimony, to the
 truth of those ancient and national maxims which
 the Report sets so completely at rest, and, indeed,
 leaves entirely unnoticed, it will not surely be
 deemed too much for a British Subject to assume,
 that a British Navy, in which, as Monsieur Talley-
 rand justly observes, consists the security and
 real power of our Country, is still an object deserv-
 ing our attention ; and that the maintenance and
 support of that Navy is intimately connected with

the maintenance and support of our Commercial Marine.*

Having pointed out some of the effects of the measures recommended by the Committee, upon the Trade of the British North American Colonies, we now proceed to shew, from the documents annexed to the Report, the extent of that Trade; and, consequently, the extent of the direct sacrifice of British Interests, which it is proposed to make, to “*enable the Countries which produce Timber; but more especially Sweden and Norway, very greatly to increase their consumption of British Produce.*”

But first it may be proper to state the conclusions of the Committee upon this head. (*Page 6.*) “*Some portion of the Shipping now engaged in transporting the Canadian Timber to this Country, might probably be compelled to seek for other employment; and although there is reason to expect that the increased supply from the North of Europe would be chiefly imported in British Vessels, the average difference in the length of*

* The value of Colonies, to a Commercial Country, being clearly pointed out in Mr. Brougham's celebrated “*Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers,*”—some extracts are subjoined in the *Appendix*.

" the voyage *might render a smaller amount of*
 " *Shipping necessary*, to carry on this particular
 " branch of Trade. But the Committee cannot
 " persuade themselves, that the procuring the best
 " and cheapest commodities from other Countries,
 " so essential to the interests of Commerce, can be
 " found ultimately detrimental to those of Naviga-
 " tion and Shipping, the great instrument by which
 " Commerce is maintained: more especially at a
 " time when it appears, by the concurrent testimony
 " of the best informed persons, that the rates of
 " Freight, and other circumstances attendant on
 " British Shipping, *enable it to enter into a suc-*
 " *cessful competition with that of every other*
 " *Country on the Globe.* The Committee at the
 " same time indulge a confident hope, that the
 " consideration of the state of some other branches
 " of Trade in which they are about to engage,
 " will suggest the means of giving additional em-
 " ployment to the shipping of this Country."*

By the official accounts (*Appendix, page 126,*)
 it appears, that the Ships *cleared out* from Great
 Britain alone (exclusive of those from Ireland and
 other places, which may be estimated at one-fourth

* This further employment would be most gratefully accepted
 by the Ship Owners, in *addition* to the present Canada Trade ;
 and would be found no burthen to them in their present con-
 dition.

more) for the British North American Colonies, in the year 1819, amounted to 1520, of the burthen of 340,147 tons, navigated by 17,564 Seamen :— that the Ships which *arrived* in Great Britain from those Colonies (exclusive of those which went to Ireland, and other places, or were lost), amounted to 1446 Ships, of 351,488 tons burthen, navigated by 16,395 Seamen ;—and that the *real value* of *British* and *Irish produce*, and *manufactures* exported to them, in the last six years (*Appendix*, page 122), was as follows :

In 1814	£4,119,393	17	7
1815	3,271,091	3	5
1816	2,270,065	9	0
1817	1,320,097	6	10
1818	1,619,420	6	5
1819	1,867,030	12	1

The years 1814 and 1815 should, however, be excluded from the present consideration, as not exhibiting a correct view of the Colonial Trade, a large portion of the Goods exported in those years, having gone for the supply of the United States.

Having thus presented a view of the valuable interests which it is proposed *gradually* to sacrifice, it may be fairly put to the understanding and unprejudiced judgment of every British Subject, whether these are interests that should, in the slightest degree, be exposed to hazard or preju-

dice, even if it were certain that such Countries as Sweden and Norway, so little calculated by their circumstances, even if they were by their inclinations (which is at least problematical), being thereby "enabled," would be willing, also, to "increase their consumption of British productions?" Ought it not, on the contrary, to be the first duty of British Statesmen to protect, encourage, and extend these interests by all the means in their power, not merely for their own sake, but for the sake of those national objects which are dependent upon them?*

In the early discussions upon this subject, great importance was attached to a remark of Sir Isaac Coffin, in the House of Commons, that much of the Wood imported from Canada is produced in the territory of the United States; from which an inference was attempted to be drawn, that the Americans were the parties principally benefited by the

* Mr. Cowie being asked (See *Appendix, page 24*), whether "he was of opinion that if the consumption of Timber was greatly increased in this Country, by a remission of Duty, or any other circumstance, the consumption of English Manufactures in Sweden would be increased?" answered, that "English Manufactures are generally prohibited into Sweden at this moment; and that therefore he could not say they would be increased. There are certain species of Manufacture that are admissible, but not generally; and of such the consumption in Sweden would no doubt be increased by a remission of the Duty on Timber."

Quebec Timber Trade. It however now appears, (*See Report, page 6*) that “the value of the Timber sold at Quebec does not exceed, by much, the expense and labour of procuring it for shipment; and that the Landholder himself gets little or nothing for the Timber.” And the evidence of Mr. Edward Ellice, upon this subject, confirms the well-known facts, that for any portion of Timber so imported, “the Americans are supplied from Canada with British Manufactures in payment; and that the more trade there is carried through that channel, the more it must be for the interest both of the Province and of this Country.”

The next points in order to be considered are, the opinions of their Lordships, that *some portion* of British Shipping might probably be compelled, by the annihilation of the North American Timber Trade, to seek for other employment; and that the increased supply of Timber from the North of Europe “would be chiefly imported in British Vessels;” with the extraordinary declaration of the “best-informed persons,” that the British Shipowner “*is enabled to enter into successful competition with Foreigners* ;” a declaration which, it is conceived, never can be reconciled with the fact, that almost every article used in the building and outfit of British Ships is burthened with duties, from which Foreign Shipping is almost entirely exempt.

In the evidence of Mr. E. Solly (*pages 17 and 18*), that gentleman states, that "the duty on the materials for Ship-building is about 100 per Cent. of the cost; which is a ground why the ships of other nations may, *in some cases*, compete with the English." Mr. S. does not specify the cases, but it is obvious that he alludes to the nations in the North of Europe, where (being the productions of the respective Countries,) the principal materials for Ship-building are exempt from such duties.

CHAPTER III.

As the select Committee deem it only "*probable*," that the transference of the Timber Trade from the British Colonies to States in the North of Europe, would drive "*some*" of the Ships engaged in it to seek for other employment,* but appear to have no doubt that the Tonnage to be employed in importing the increased supply of Timber from those States, would be British, we will again have recourse to the Official documents annexed to the Report, in order that, seeing what has been, we may be enabled to form a judgment of what may be expected for the future, under similar circumstances.

It is abundantly manifest, that the promotion and increase of the Trade with Norway and Sweden, has been principally in the view of the Lords' Committee: and equally certain, that the measures re-

* What other employment could they find, without displacing other British Ships?

commended by their Lordships would greatly advantage those Countries, particularly Norway; let us, therefore, now see what is the amount of Tonnage, and description of Ships employed in that Trade.

The Custom House books having been destroyed by fire in the month of February 1814, the Register General has not the means of preparing the account for an earlier period; and indeed it is perhaps better, and at this time sufficient, to consider what description of vessels is now employed, than what it was twenty years back.

By an account (*Appendix, page 124*), the Tonnage entered inwards, and cleared outwards, from and to Norway, is stated to have been as follows :

	<i>Arrived.</i>		<i>Cleared.</i>	
	British. Tons.	Foreign. Tons.	British. Tons.	Foreign. Tons.
1817,	22,580	52,713	12,200	44,719
1818,	21,996	85,984	12,887	72,018
1819,	17,087	82,689	11,760	65,054
	3)61,663	221,386	36,847	181,791
Annual Average. }	20,554	73,795	12,282	60,597

If, therefore, we may judge of the description of

Ships that *will* be employed in the extended trade with Norway, from those which have been, or are now engaged in it, we may expect the proportion will be about *one British Ship to four Foreign Ships* of equal size. Upon what ground, then, are we to hope that the increased importation of Timber would be chiefly brought in British Vessels? If the cheaper navigation of British Ships be sufficient to secure a preference to them (and it is assumed in the Report that they sail cheaper), why is so decided a preference now given to Vessels of Norway?

Suppose for an instant, for the sake of argument, that gratitude for the undeserved and most impolitic boon which it is proposed to confer on Norway, to the manifest and ruinous injury of our own Colonies and countrymen, should induce her to give a preference to British Ships, and that *every* Vessel to be employed in bringing such increased quantity of Foreign Timber would be British built;—how would the matter then stand?

As before stated, the shipping which arrived last year in Great Britain, from the North American Colonies, amounted to 351,488 Tons, navigated by 16,395 Men: And the number which cleared out for those Colonies from Great Britain, amounted to 340,147 Tons, navigated by 17,564 Men. Now let us only suppose two-thirds of the smaller amount

to be thrown out of that Trade ; that is to say,
226,765 Tons, and 11,710 Men.*

To import the same quantity of goods from the nearer countries of Norway and Sweden, as is now brought from the more distant countries of North America (for upon an average the ships might make three trips where they now make but one), would require only one-third of the amount and number of Tonnage and Men ; that is, 75,588 Tons, and 3903 Men (indeed, the proportion of men on these short voyages might be much less) ; there would consequently remain to be otherwise provided with employ, 151,177 Tons of shipping, and 7807 Seamen,

How the vessels, which are peculiarly fit, and, for the greater part, fit only for the Timber Trade, may be disposed of, without ruin to their owners, it is difficult to conjecture ; but with respect to the *seamen*, we have only to look to what was their condition before the colonial Timber Trade afforded them their present employment, with the loss of which they are now threatened.†

* Immense as this amount of Shipping is, it is little more than half the tonnage engaged in the trade of those Colonies.

The total	Tons.
Entered Inwards in the year 1819, was	572,887
Cleared Outwards,	570,924

† It is to be regretted that the Petition of the Ship-owners of London to the *House of Commons*, dated the 16th of May last, of

By the Report of the Committee, which in the winter of 1817-18 undertook to provide for the distressed seamen by whom the streets of London were then crowded, it will be seen, that in that year, no less than 2600 of these poor creatures, many of whom had bled, and most of whom had fought in the defence of their Country, were received into vessels and houses provided for their temporary accommodation: the greater part of them were reduced to the very extremity of indigence and wretchedness; seven hundred and sixteen were sick, chiefly occasioned by want of food and clothing; and, notwithstanding all the care and attention that were so benevolently afforded them, no less than fifty-six of them died! Since that

which a copy is annexed (*see Appendix*), had not been presented to their Lordships, as it forcibly exhibits the opinions and apprehensions of this numerous and important body, upon the proposed measure.

A Petition was also presented to the House of Commons by the *Ship-builders* of London (who stated that the measure would necessarily and unavoidably produce the most ruinous consequences to them); besides numerous Petitions from the Merchants and Ship-owners at the *Out-ports*; including the following, viz.

Liverpool.	Leith.
Newcastle.	Kirkaldy.
Glasgow.	Ayr.
Greenock.	Port Glasgow.

period, the number of seamen employed in one year in the North American Trade, from Great Britain alone, has increased from 10,370 to upwards of 17,000; and the happy result is, that a distressed seaman, if able to work, is no longer to be found in our streets. Deprive them of the useful employment which that trade affords, and their only honest alternative will be, either again to linger, and finally perish, in the streets and fields, or to enter into the service of our maritime rivals, whose sounder policy will doubtless readily afford them the well-deserved protection and encouragement, of which it is proposed that their own country should deprive them.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE Committee, after stating in their Report (*pages 4 and 5*) that “no other circumstance than the
“system of high duties upon Foreign Timber
“could have induced the general use of Canada
“Timber for House-building; and that “the use
“of it is discontinued in his Majesty’s Dock
“Yards,” add, that “the demand for Wood from
“the countries in the North of Europe has been
“progressively diminishing, so as to occasion great
“interruption to the trade with those Countries,
“particularly with Norway; whose inhabitants,
“notwithstanding the predilection they have uni-
“formly shown for British manufactures, are not
“only left without the means of consuming them,
“but of paying for those which they have received,
“and for which nearly half a million is said to be
“owing; *so that the export of Manufactures has*
“*been REDUCED, to an extent* which cannot be esti-
“mated, merely by the direct exports to those Coun-
“tries, as it appears that a considerable portion of
“the manufactures consumed in them are intro-
“duced through the channel of the German fairs.”

In considering the purport or force of these observations, it might be deemed sufficient to examine, whether the increased demand for manufactures by our countrymen in the Colonies, has kept pace with the diminished demand for them by our foreign friends in the North of Europe ; but, as the terms used by the Committee, lead to the conclusion that Norway and Sweden formerly afforded a considerably greater market for our manufactures than at present, it is necessary to enquire, first, what was, in fact, the state of our exports to those Countries in the golden days to which the Committee refer ? and secondly, what is the present state of them, as shewn by the Official Returns ?

As to the portion of manufactures introduced through the channel of the German fairs, the quantity thus sent to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, cannot be supposed to be large, as the greater part of their Ships usually return home from this country in ballast ; insomuch, that, soon after the Tonnage Duty was imposed on Vessels carrying goods, the Lords of the Treasury were induced to issue an order, permitting the Masters and Crews of Norway Ships (as a sort of bounty upon exportation,) to take out small quantities of British Manufactures for their own use, without subjecting the Vessel to that duty. If, therefore, any large portion of goods do find their way to those Countries through the circuitous and expensive channels of the German fairs,

the Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians must have a strange and almost incredible predilection for the markets, ships, and charges of other countries ; and one which leaves no ground to hope that our Vessels will be voluntarily employed by them. It is, however, important to remark, that whatever the quantity may be which goes through this channel, it is to be *added* to that which is shewn by the Official Accounts to be exported direct to those places ; the actual amount is, therefore, so much the more.

The Committee observe, that “ till the year 1809 “ little or no duty had been imposed upon the “ various species of Timber ;” and, as causes existed for some years prior to 1808 to make Denmark and Norway the *entrepôts* of the British Trade, similar to those which operated in the British North American Colonies (particularly Canada), in the years 1814, 1815, and 1816,—an extract is therefore made from the account of the Trade in the three years prior to 1802. (*See Appendix, page 120.*)

Official Value of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures exported.

In	To Denmark and Norway.	To Sweden.
1799,	£194,041 3 2	£26,120 1 3
1800,	186,703 17 4	29,761 8 5
1801,	144,989 0 2	46,110 3 2
	3)525,734 0 8	101,991 12 10
	£175,244 13 6	33,997 4 3
		175,244 13 6

Average export in the above three years £209,241 17 9

This being the “*official*,” and not the “*real*” value, it is proper, by way of setting the matter in a fair point of view, to state also the “*official*” value of the exports of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures to North America in the *last* three years, viz.

In 1817,	£1,012,834 19 6
1818,	1,288,149 7 11
1819,	1,523,133 4 7
	3)3,824,117 12 0

Average of three years £1,274,705 17 4

From these accounts, then, it appears, that before those duties were laid on Foreign Timber, which, happily for this nation, gave rise to the Timber Trade with North America; Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were in the practice of taking about

one-sixth part of the quantity of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures which, now that a portion of the Timber Trade has been transferred to the British Colonies, is annually exported to them.

That this great demand for our Manufactures in North America is the direct consequence of its Timber Trade, will be obvious, on looking at the accounts of Exports to our Colonies there, at periods antecedent to the existence of that Trade, viz.

Official value of British and Irish Manufactures exported.

In 1799,	£822,796	11	0
1800,	739,183	0	8
1801,	858,723	17	10
	3)2420,703	9	6
Average of three years	£806,901	3	2

So that, the quantity exported in the last three years, forms an *excess* of no less, upon the average, than 467,804l. 14s. 2d. per annum: which increase alone, as will be presently shewn, is more in amount than the whole exports of Manufactures to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, put together!

Let us now examine the extent to which, as the Report states, the export of Manufactures to those Countries, and the importation of Timber from them, have been *reduced*.

*Official value of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures exported.**

	To Denmark and Norway.	Sweden.
In 1817,	£306,960 3 10	£36,743 11 7
1818,	264,736 1 6	40,973 13 4
1819,	245,094 18 8	40,419 0 11
	3)816,791 4 0	118,136 5 10
	272,263 14 8	39,378 15 3
Add Denmark and Norway	272,263 14 8	
Average of three years,	£311,642 9 11	

The average annual Export was, therefore, no less than 311,642l. 9s. 11d. whilst in the three years from 1799 to 1801, it was (as before shewn), only 209,241l. 17s. 9d.; making, instead of a reduction, an *excess* of *direct export* in the last three years, over that of the years 1799, 1800, and 1801, to no less an amount than 102,400l. 12s. 2d. per Annum.

* The *Official value* of Goods is always the same: it has been adopted by the Custom House, and retained for a century past in the public accounts, for the mere purpose of shewing the increase or decrease of Trade from year to year. It has of course no reference to the *real value* of the Goods, which is in general much higher.

Should we not ask here, what is it then that their Lordships mean by the *reduced* Export, which it is the object of the Committee to correct, by the curtailment of the Trade of the British North American Colonies ?

But, even if the whole of the British Trade with Norway and Sweden should cease (although the prejudice in favour of their Wood, its consequent exclusive use in the British Dock-yards, and peculiar fitness for many purposes, will always secure for it an extensive demand), what would be the loss, in comparison with the more valuable and extensive trade with the British Colonies in North America,—which maintains upwards of 50,000 of our fellow countrymen who have emigrated thither, besides its native population of upwards of one million of British Subjects ;—which employs one-fourth “ of the whole of the Tonnage engaged in the “ Foreign Trade of the kingdom ;”—(see *Mr. Buckle's Evidence*, p. 86,) affords relief to our distressed Ship-owners ;—and keeps many thousands of our brave Sailors in useful activity, whose sad alternative, if deprived of employment, we have before alluded to ;—which has made, and still keeps us, independent of our recent enemies, or rivals, and present friends, for the supply of an article of the first necessity ;—supports our national Marine ;—and, in a word, conduces more importantly than any other branch of our trade (not

even excepting the Fisheries), to the strength, security, and general prosperity of the Empire?

Their Lordships observe in their Report (*page 6*),
 “ that a considerable amount of Capital and Machinery employed in this Country, in sawing
 “ and preparing for consumption the Timber imported from the Baltic, has been, in a great
 “ degree, rendered useless and unproductive ;” but however this effect may be regretted, it cannot be attributed to a reduced import of *Timber in the log*, since the official accounts shew that the import of this description of Timber has greatly increased,* whilst that of Deals has actually diminished ;—so that, how it should happen that British Saw-Mills (which may be as well applied to the cutting of Canada as of Norway Timber) should have been thrown out of employment by the altered state of the Trade, is intelligible on no other supposition, than that Canada Timber has the faculty of converting itself into different shapes and sizes, without the use of the saw.

* A statement of *Four Yearly Averages* of Timber and Deals imported, will be found at *page 89*.

CHAPTER V.

HAVING pointed out the error into which the Committee have been drawn, in believing that any *reduction* in the export of British Manufactures to Sweden and Norway has taken place, it will now be shewn, that though the Importations of wood from the North of Europe, are less than when it enjoyed the exclusive supply, yet that the demand for wood from those countries has *not*, “ of late years, been *progressively diminishing*.” It will also be shewn, what proportion the actual importations from them bear to those from North America; for, if it shall appear clearly that, notwithstanding the duties upon the former, the greater expense of bringing the latter from the place of its growth, and the general prejudice against its quality, are such, that Foreigners have still a fair proportion of the *Timber Trade*, and the greatest share of the Trade in sawn Timber, by which our Saw-mills are so injuriously affected, (and, it has already been shewn, that they take more

of our Manufactures than before the existence of the North American Timber Trade,) it is presumed that their Lordships will be of opinion, that all idea of even partially, much less "*entirely*," excluding wood, the growth of Canada, from the means of "competition in the British market," should be given up: and that when the question shall come to be thoroughly sifted, and properly understood, and the real situation and objects of those merchants who so anxiously seek the annihilation of the North American Timber Trade, come to be known, it will be deemed both just and expedient, not only to render permanent, but even to extend, the existing protection to our fellow subjects in North America, and to the shipping and other national interests connected with their Trade.

In order to shew that, of late years, there has been no material falling off in the Foreign Timber Trade, it may be sufficient to refer to the official account of duties paid upon that portion of the Imports entered for consumption in this Country, viz.

	£.	s.	d.
In 1816,	760,767	10	11
— 1817,	937,268	1	8
— 1818,	1,182,285	0	6½
— 1819,	1,019,311	18	1½

Besides the Timber that paid duty, there remained “*in Bond*,” on the 5th of April last,

3,735 Masts, Yards, or Bowsprits ;
 10,325 Long Hundreds of Deals ;
 3,363 Loads of Oak Planks ;
 641 Ditto of Oak ;
 28,330 Ditto of Fir ;
 5,694 Hundreds of Staves ;
 1,718 Loads of Battens ;

besides a considerable quantity of other descriptions of wood of less importance.

A practice has also grown up, within the last two or three years, of entering Fir Boards as Palings, though of a description which ought to have been entered as Deals, the duty on the former (which are the mere outside slab of the tree, not convertible into Deals,) being only 3l. 14s. 6d. per long hundred, whilst on Deals it is 20l. 15s. 8d. This advantage the Importers have been able to secure under the wording of the Consolidation Act, which no otherwise defines Palings, than as Boards “*hewed on one side.*” If the duty as Deals had been paid upon that proportion of these boards, which were not (what the Legislature, no doubt, intended they should be,) the outside slab of the tree, the total amount of duty on Deals imported, would have been much larger than shewn in the official account ; it may, however, be more satisfactory to state the actual quantities of each species of wood imported,

than merely to state the Duty ; it is, accordingly, here inserted.

Comparative Account of the quantities of Timber, Masts, Deals, &c. imported from the North of Europe, and from the British Colonies in North America, in the last 5 Years ; Extracted from the official Accounts.—Appendix, page 130 to 142.

FROM THE NORTH OF EUROPE.

Years.	Fir Timber. Loads.	Oak & Oak Plank. Loads.	Masts under 12 In. Diam.	Masts above 12 In.	Deals and Deal- Ends.	Battens and Ends.	Staves.	Wains- cot Logs. Loads.
1815	167,886	16,518	32,006	4,225	47,941	4,686	25,204	2,525
1816	60,158	6,682	5,714	5,364	17,426	1,580	7,048	1,673
1817	80,968	4,425	8,368	2,554	31,757	4,152	13,898	2,680
1818	130,654	3,287	12,260	938	38,674	5,065	7,797	2,060
1819	102,864	9,852	7,456	2,030	34,044	5,327	11,011	3,201
Total paid Duty. }	542,530	40,764	65,804	15,111	169,842	20,810	64,958	12,139

To the above is to be added, the further quantity imported and put in "Bond." The account (*Appendix, page 142,*) is given to the 5th of April, 1820: it is therefore assumed, that four-fifths had been imported within the five years above-mentioned, viz.

	22,664	3,814	2,597	1,138	8,260	1,375	4,555	311
Total Impor. }	565,194	44,578	68,401	16,249	178,102	22,185	69,513	12,450
Average.	113,039	8,915	13,680	3,249	35,620	4,439	13,902	2,490

FROM NORTH AMERICA.

Years.	Fir Timber. Loads.	Oak & Oak Plank. Loads.	Masts under 12 In. Diam.	Masts above 12 In.	Deals and Deal Ends.	Battens and Ends.	Staves.	Wain- scot Logs. Loads.
1815	107,550	3,424	4,696	3,231	1,913	53	12,914	14
1816	131,825	6,522	4,746	6,354	1,702	93	21,025	—
1817	140,280	4,320	5,252	7,983	3,471	201	23,743	—
1818	214,102	4,725	6,729	4,263	6,481	250	33,046	—
1819	267,065	9,483	9,170	5,002	9,871	359	42,998	—
Total.	860,822	28,474	30,593	26,853	23,438	956	133,726	14
Aver.	172,164	5,695	6,118	5,366	4,687	191	26,745	3

From these accounts, then, it appears, that although the importations of “Timber in the log” from North America, have annually exceeded those from the North of Europe, about one half, yet that those of “Oak and Oak Plank” have been as 8915 loads to 5695: and Masts, under twelve inches diameter, as 13,680 to 6118: (the most valuable kinds of masts, those above twelve inches in diameter, it will be seen, come chiefly from Canada:) but that the proportion of Deals,—that description of wood which creates an “impediment to the employment of British capital in Saw Mills,”—is as 35,620 (long hundreds of 120 pieces) to 4687! that is to say, the importations from the North of Europe of Deals and Deal-Ends, exceed in number those from North America, in

the proportion of *nearly eight to one*. So that, the loss of employment to the Saw Mills, is not to be attributed to, and is not chargeable upon, the Timber Trade of our own Colonies, but to the fact, of the Timber being sent here ready sawn, by those Foreign Competitors, whose prosperity it is now proposed to advance and build upon their ruin, and to the manifest injury of the clearest and best interests of the Mother Country, in order that Foreigners may resume the monopoly which they formerly enjoyed; and that we may take our chance with the rest of the World, of the inestimable privilege, as it seems to be considered, of supplying Norway and Sweden with the Goods which we shall have enabled them to purchase. It is to be observed, too, that the Deals from Europe are in general much larger than those from North America, viz.

AVERAGE LENGTHS.

(See appendix, page 128.)

From Norway	..	..	..	..	12 Feet,
— Sweden	..	..	..	..	16
— Petersburg	..	..	..	..	18
— Memel	..	..	..	..	18
— Canada	..	..	..	..	12

And that the article of "Paling Boards," of which upwards of 180,000 were imported from the North of Europe, and paid duty, in the year 1818, and a still greater quantity in the last year, is not included; the apparent quantity of Timber, of

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every description, imported from that part of the world, as exhibited in the official account, is therefore far short of the real amount.

Let it also be remembered, that the sawing of the Deals, imported from places in Europe, employs the labour and capital of Foreigners ; whilst those imported from North America are sawn by our fellow subjects, a great part of whom have been driven to seek employment in the Colonies, to avoid starvation at home.

CHAPTER VI.

THE conclusions herein drawn, being founded upon the official data appended to the Report of the Select Committee, it will, it is presumed, no more be asserted, that the North American Timber Trade has swallowed up that of the North of Europe; or that the former derives greater protection and encouragement from the existing duty on Foreign Timber, than it deserves and requires; but, on the contrary, be admitted, that Foreigners still possess the greater part of the Timber Trade, which they carry on principally in their own vessels:—and that, so far from our exports to those countries having declined, they are more extensive than formerly.

The question, then, that would seem to remain is, whether we should give up that portion of the Timber Trade which our Colonies possess, and relinquish all the national advantages resulting from it, and leave ourselves again exposed to the danger and inconvenience with which the capricious policy of the Northern States, (the origin of the increase of duty) threatened us in the year 1809; which may come upon us, when the ruin and possible

loss of our valuable Colonies will have deprived us of a resource which we shall have renounced, merely that Foreigners may resume the monopoly which they formerly enjoyed ?

The reasons offered in favour of this proposition by the Report, are ;

1st. That " the Canadian merchants were never
 " led to believe that the duties on Foreign Timber
 " would be permanent ; that an expectation was,
 " however, held out that the duty of 2l. 1s.
 " first imposed, would be continued for some considerable time, but no such expectation was fairly
 " raised with respect to the war duty, and the
 " duty imposed in 1813 ; and that the exemption
 " from duty on Canadian Timber has always been
 " temporary."

2dly. The inferior quality of the North American Timber.

3dly. The much cheaper rate at which a supply of wood from the North of Europe may be obtained, independently of the duties.

Before proceeding to offer some observations upon the first of these positions, it may be right again to advert to the origin of the high duties on

Foreign Timber, and the consequent establishment of the North American Timber Trade.

Upon this head the Report observes, that “ till
 “ the year 1809, little or no duty had been imposed
 “ upon the various species of Timber ; in that and
 “ the succeeding year, however, the *nature of our*
 “ *political relations* with the Baltic Powers, led to
 “ an *apprehension that great difficulty might be*
 “ *found* in deriving the usual supplies of Timber
 “ from that quarter, not only for the general pur-
 “ poses of domestic use, but more particularly for
 “ the purpose of Ship-building.” And in Mr. Mar-
 ryat’s excellent speech in the House of Commons,
 on the 5th of June last, will be found a clear ex-
 planation of “ the nature of our political relations”
 with those powers ; and the grounds of our “ appre-
 “ hension, that great difficulty might be found in
 “ deriving the usual supplies of Timber from that
 “ quarter.” Mr. Marryat says, “ The system of
 “ imposing protecting duties, in favour of the pro-
 “ duce of Colonies, has uniformly been acted upon
 “ for centuries past, and continues to be acted upon
 “ to the present moment, by every power in Europe ;
 “ and therefore no umbrage can be reasonably taken
 “ against us, for adhering to the universal practice :
 “ but the complaint, that this branch of Trade ori-
 “ ginated in a spirit of hostility towards the North-
 “ ern Powers, comes with a very bad grace from
 “ them, as the truth is, that it originated, not only

“ in their hostility, but in their perfidy and ill-faith
 “ towards us.

“ These Powers, notwithstanding the Berlin and
 “ Milan decrees of Buonaparte, continued an inter-
 “ course with this country, which was carried on
 “ by means of licenses till the year 1811, when, at
 “ the command of their great Master, and our
 “ enemy, by a sudden and simultaneous movement,
 “ they confiscated every vessel in all their ports
 “ from this country, together with their cargoes,
 “ to the value of not less than seven millions of
 “ money. They probably fancied that we were
 “ dependent upon them for our supply of Timber,
 “ Hemp, and other Naval Stores ; and that by cut-
 “ ting off all communication with us, they would
 “ oblige us to make peace on such terms as they
 “ might think proper to propose. But Great Britain,
 “ excluded from the old world, found out a new one
 “ in her own colonies ; and discovered in them re-
 “ sources which enabled her not only to maintain the
 “ contest, but to bring it at length to a successful and
 “ glorious termination. For this she explored the
 “ Forests of Canada, and drew from them those
 “ supplies of Timber which she had formerly pro-
 “ cured from the Baltic ; and now that this Trade
 “ has grown up to its present height, and is carried
 “ on with equal advantage to ourselves and to our
 “ Colonies, we must surely be dotards and idiots to
 “ sacrifice our mutual prosperity, at the request, and

“ for the benefit, of those who wish to regain that
 “ which they lost by their own ill faith and injustice.”

As to the expectations raised, that the duties on Foreign Timber which were then, or might afterwards be laid on, were to be permanent, it is undeniable that, “ the merchants connected with “ the British provinces in North America,” who, “ (as stated in the Evidence of Mr. John Bainbridge, page 56,) were requested to use their “ endeavours to procure that supply of Timber “ which, from the restrictions in the North of “ Europe, had been prevented coming from its “ usual source,” were distinctly assured that they might rely upon adequate encouragement, and the continued protection of the capitals which they were invited to embark in the trade. And the Ship-owners were, at the same time, left in no sort of doubt, either as to the policy which Government intended to pursue towards the Colonies, or as to the grounds of that policy, by the following letter from the Board of Trade, to the Chairman of a considerable body of Ship-owners at Hull.

“ *Council Office, Whitehall,*
April 18, 1810.”

“ SIR—The Lords of his Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council having had under consideration the Petition of the Merchants and Ship-owners of the Town of Kingston-upon-Hull, praying that no more

licenses may be granted to foreign vessels, permitting them to import Timber from the Baltic, &c. I am directed to acquaint you, for the information of the Gentlemen of Hull, interested in the Timber Trade, that an abundant supply of Timber is essential to the manufacturing and trading interests of Great Britain ; and that it does not appear that an adequate supply of that article could have been secured, if all importations from the Baltic had been suddenly interrupted.

“ I am, however, to observe, that the Lords of the Council have not recommended the granting of any licenses for such importations in foreign vessels from any ports where British vessels are permitted to enter ; and that the increase of foreign vessels is the unavoidable consequence of the extension of the war, and the exclusion of British Ships from the ports of the Continent.

“ I am directed further to state, that their Lordships have under consideration the expediency of committing to Parliament, that additional duties should be imposed on the importation of foreign Timber ; *with a view to give a decided preference to Timber the growth of his Majesty's Colonies in North America*, which is allowed to be imported, duty free, by the law as it now stands.

“ S. COTTERELL.

“ R. W. Moxon, Esq. Hull.”

Upon so plain and unequivocal a declaration as this, what Merchant would have hesitated to invest his capital—what Ship-owner would have questioned his reliance on this resource for the employment of his Shipping—or what reasonable person would have prophesied, that as soon as the realization of the objects proposed by the course of policy, thus publicly declared, should have become most manifestly apparent, in the establishing an abundant supply of Timber at a cheap rate—the securing that independence of Foreigners for this necessary article which was so ardently desired—the furnishing employment for so large a proportion of our Shipping—and the providing a resource for our surplus population ;—who would have believed, that when these objects should have been thus happily accomplished, it would have been proposed to destroy at once this work and labour of our hands,” and coldly to consign to destruction, the very interests which the pursuit of these objects had created ?

How could any more specific pledge have been obtained, than his Majesty's Government voluntarily offered ? Could the parties concerned have presumed to make use of such language as this, to the distinguished individuals upon whom the consideration of the question devolved :—“ You have proposed certain objects, as desirable to be accomplished for the national good. We believe

“ them capable of attainment, and on the faith of
 “ the protection offered to us, we are willing to
 “ embark our capital, our labour, and our skill,
 “ in the pursuit of them to the necessary extent ;
 “ but some evil-foreboding spirit has led us to
 “ dread, that at the moment when our exertions
 “ shall have reached their maturity—when the sound
 “ wisdom of your policy shall have become mani-
 “ fest in its fruits ; some new course of policy may
 “ peradventure find its way into your councils, under
 “ the influence of which we may be told, that
 “ your protection was never meant to be ‘ perma-
 “ nent.’ ”

Let us suppose, however, that nothing like a pledge
 had been given ; what is there in the situation or cir-
 cumstances of the North American Colonies, or in
 those of the Merchants and Ship-owners engaged
 in Trade with them, which should make it just or
 expedient to place them upon a less favourable foot-
 ing than the other British Colonies ? They, like the
 rest, are peopled by British subjects, but with a larger
 proportion of native English, Scotch, and Irish,
 than any of the others. They, like the rest, are com-
 pelled to employ British Ships only ; and to take all
 their supplies of Manufactures, &c. from the Mother
 Country : Why then are their productions less en-
 titled to protection and encouragement than those of
 the Sugar Colonies ? Are the British Manufactures
 which they take in return for their Timber, insignifi-

cant in amount? They take annually upwards of a million and a half sterling. Are the ships and seamen they employ of small importance? They amount to one-fourth part of the whole shipping of the Empire engaged in Foreign Trade. Are the sailors less hardy and useful? They are of the very best description of the good. The number of apprentices, too, is greater than is employed in any other Trade, and the climate is peculiarly calculated to make them hardy and expert. Under these circumstances, could it require a pledge from the British Government to secure to such interests, protection from the overwhelming competition of any Foreigners whatever?*

The observation of the Committee, that “there
“ is nothing to preclude Parliament from consider-

* On looking to the speeches in parliament, in the month of May 1810, when the system of high Duties on Foreign Timber was first resorted to, (vide Appendix) it will be seen that the objects which the Legislature had in view, were precisely those which have been accomplished : viz.

- 1st. To reduce the price of Timber.
- 2nd. To make this Country independent of Foreigners for a supply.
- 3d. To give employment to British Ships and Seamen.
- 4th. To encourage the British Colonies, and thus enable them to take our Manufactures.

“ ing so important a question, as the future regula-
 “ tion of this essential branch of Commerce, with
 “ a view to the permanent interests, and general
 “ prosperity of the Empire,” is one from which it
 is impossible to dissent ; and when the subject shall
 come to be discussed, it is to be hoped that the
 following remarks, extracted from an article in the
 Quarterly Review, just published, upon the subject
 of “ Emigration to Canada,” will meet with that
 attention from the Legislature, to which they are
 entitled for their truth and importance : viz.

“ The Market for our Commodities, which is
 “ afforded by a flourishing and increasing Colony,
 “ is a source of wealth to the Mother Country,
 “ far exceeding probably what would have been
 “ produced by the amount of the capital bestowed
 “ on it, if retained at home : It is speaking, we
 “ are persuaded, far within compass to say, that
 “ for every 1000l. carried out to Upper Canada,
 “ 500 acres of fertile land, which would otherwise
 “ have remained an unprofitable desert, will have
 “ been within twenty years brought under cultiva-
 “ tion. Let any one calculate the supplies of Corn
 “ and other produce which these 500 acres will
 “ afford us, and the demands for our various
 “ Manufactures which they will create in return.
 “ It is impossible indeed to contemplate attentively
 “ the present state of the Continent ;—the extreme
 “ jealousy of this Country which prevails in most

“ parts of it,—the zeal for improving their own
 “ Manufactures,—together with the superior cheap-
 “ ness of labour,—without anticipating, as at least
 “ probable, a great and progressive diminution of
 “ that enormous demand which has hitherto existed
 “ in Europe for the productions of British enter-
 “ prise and skill. With such an expectation before
 “ us, nothing can be more consolatory than the pros-
 “ pect of that boundless market for our Com-
 “ modities, which seems to be opening in the New
 “ World, from which the other nations of Europe,
 “ even should they hereafter become rivals, can never
 “ hope to exclude us. In this point of view, the
 “ Revolution in Spanish America is likely to prove
 “ of incalculable importance to us : but our own
 “ Colonies are, on many accounts, calculated to
 “ offer greater advantage to our Commerce than
 “ those of any other Country ; our own Country-
 “ men possess in a peculiar degree, and are likely
 “ to transmit to their descendants, both a taste for
 “ that description of luxuries which commerce and
 “ manufactures furnish, and a persevering industry
 “ in acquiring the means of commanding them ;
 “ not to mention the preference generated by habit
 “ for such articles in particular, as are most in use
 “ in the Mother Country.”

The following remarks by the same writer, upon
 the conduct of the Canadians in the late war with
 the United States, are equally striking and just.

“ Let it not be forgotten how fully and how arro-
 “ gantly the American writers anticipated the con-
 “ quest of Canada, at the commencement of the late
 “ American war: the Parent State was, indeed,
 “ at that time, under circumstances of peculiar
 “ difficulty ; exhausted by the length, and embar-
 “ rassed by the continuance, of a most desperate
 “ struggle in Europe, yet the Canadians, amidst
 “ all these disadvantages, amidst the imbecility and
 “ despondency of their own commander, made
 “ good the defence of their country against all
 “ the efforts of the Americans. They appear
 “ indeed to come short of no British subjects
 “ throughout the world, in devoted attachment
 “ to our government ; and (what to them is a
 “ necessary part of that attachment,) in a rooted
 “ aversion to that of the United States.”

After deprecating the idea that Canada is held
 by an uncertain tenure, the Reviewer adds, “ there
 “ is no doubt, however, that prophecies frequently
 “ cause their own fulfilment: the patient hardly
 “ stands a fair chance for his life, if he is left to
 “ the care of a Physician, who is convinced that
 “ he cannot possibly recover ; and if our govern-
 “ ment were unfortunately to act with respect to
 “ Canada, under the conviction that it must inevita-
 “ bly in a few years be wrested from us, the event
 “ would probably confirm their expectation.”

“ Such, indeed, as the Canadians have shewn
“ themselves in the late contest, it would be a
“ degradation of the British character to abandon
“ or to neglect them: but every motive of policy,
“ as well as honour, concurs in recommending
“ that Canada should, with the utmost diligence,
“ be cherished and fortified: should a line of con-
“ duct be adopted in all respects opposite to that
“ which has been sketched out as tending to its
“ decay, we see no reason to doubt that the result
“ would be altogether opposite likewise: and where
“ else shall we find so strong a barrier to the
“ boundless increase of that power, which threatens
“ to prove the most formidable rival that Great
“ Britain has ever encountered?”

CHAPTER VII.

THE observations of the Committee upon the subject of the *price* at which a supply of Timber might be obtained, if their Lordships' suggestions for discouraging the importation of Colonial Timber were to be acted on, are now to be considered.

In a commodity of such general and extensive consumption, it must be admitted that cheapness of supply is an object to be always kept in view, and which is generally found to be the offspring of competition; at present the country has open to it two sources of supply, and an active competition is maintained between them: now, without looking to any national objects connected with the keeping open one of these sources, how can it be made to appear, that the adoption of measures which must infallibly destroy that one, and throw the monopoly again into the hands of the other, would promote cheapness of price?

But let us, for the sake of being quite sure that we come to a right conclusion on this head (instead

of depending wholly on the advice or opinions of Merchants or Agents, who have made large advances, for which they can receive no other payment than Timber), just look at the actual state of the prices of Timber in the London Market, for several years previous to the imposition of the high duties on Foreign Timber.

The following is a statement of the prices of Memel Timber from 1800 to 1810, taken from the London Price Current, viz.

		£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
In 1800	....	6	0	0				
1801	....	5	0	0	to	5	10	0 per Load.
1802	....	4	5	0	—	5	0	0
1803	....	5	10	0	—	6	5	0
1804	....	5	0	0	—	5	5	0
1805	....	4	10	0	—	5	0	0
1806	....	6	0	0	—	7	10	0
1807	....	7	15	0	—	8	0	0
1808	....	8	0	0	—	14	0	0
1809	....	14	14	0	—	16	16	0
1810	....	12	0	0	—	14	0	0

The prices of Memel Timber only, have been selected, because the consumption runs chiefly on that article; and, also, because it is the one with which the Canada Pine comes, probably, mostly into competition.

From this statement the following result may be

drawn ;—1st, that from 1800 to 1806—years in which the political relations of the country did not interrupt the ordinary intercourse with the Baltic,—the price of Memel Timber was seldom below 5l. and the average was above that rate—being 11. 5s. per load higher than the present price of Canada Timber, as quoted in the Appendix to the Report. In 1807 the rupture with Denmark took place, from which period it would not be fair to pursue the comparison ; but looking to the year 1809, when all the North of Europe became shut against us, we perceive,—2dly, the enormous price which the country had to pay for Timber (16l. 16s. per load,) in consequence of its depending on one source of supply only,—that source being then almost wholly closed to it.

So far, therefore, as regards the question of the *price* of Timber, it appears that the competition of North America (like all other free competitions) has had the effect of reducing it very considerably ; and it would be assuming a fact contrary to all experience and probability, to conclude that a more extensive demand in this country, would not have the effect of raising the price upon the purchaser on the continent of Europe. And this, in fact, is the precise effect to which the advocates of a change in the system, look :—what is it they desire, but that the price abroad should rise, because they say it is now too low ?

It is true that the taking off part of the duty would "*enable*" the foreign Merchant to supply the British consumer so much cheaper ; but, upon what ground is it to be expected that he would do so ; especially when he tells you, that the reason why he wants the duty reduced is, to "*enable*" him to raise his own price ?

The measure would also enable our foreign friends in the North of Europe, to reimburse from the British Exchequer, the advances made to them by certain commission merchants in this country ; but if this be so desirable an object, would it not, in every respect, be better to resort at once to a vote of Parliament ? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who could assent to the mode proposed by the Committee, must be well persuaded that the peculiar claims or merits of this class of merchants entitle them to such bounty and distinction ; and having satisfied his mind upon that point, he would surely deem a direct grant a more simple, as it would be a more manly and economical course, than one which aims a deadly blow at some of the best and most natural interests of the British Empire.

It is to be regretted, that for the sake of having the whole case before it, the Committee did not, while investigating the situation of the Norway Merchants with their foreign correspondents, and seek-

ing to make them the objects of the peculiar care and commiseration of the British Legislature, institute a similar enquiry into the condition of the Merchants engaged in the Colonial Trade in that same particular;—had such a course of enquiry been pursued, it would have been found, that the advances for the Colonies exceeded one million sterling; and it is notorious that, for some time past, the gross proceeds of a cargo of North American Timber, have done little more than pay the freight and other charges; whilst it is admitted (*see Evidence, page 29,*) that Deals from Norway, at the present price of 38l. per hundred, leave 10l. for the prime cost.

The truth is, that of late the import of wood from *both* countries has been unprofitable;—and as it may be, it is no less true, that hardly any article of import into this Country for the last two years, has been otherwise than unprofitable: With respect to timber in particular, in addition to that general depreciation of property in which it has shared, there has been an excessive importation, principally occasioned by the want of employment for British Shipping; which, with other causes (including the parliamentary enquiry upon the subject), has occasioned a temporary stagnation; but although this effect be sensibly felt by the Merchants, the Ship-owners have, to a certain extent, been relieved, by the employment of their

Ships ; and the public at large greatly benefitted by the excessive cheapness of wood. Even in these circumstances, the Baltic Merchant has still an important advantage over the Canadian ; for although the duty on his commodity is high, the former does not, or need not, pay it, until he effects a sale ; his only advance, therefore, in general cases, consists of freight and insurance, which are of small amount, being in proportion to the shortness of the voyage ; whereas the importer from the Colonies has not only much higher freight and insurance to pay, but has to remit the cost price in goods, and to place them in the Colony, before he can receive the Timber in exchange.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE *quality of the Timber* imported from the North American Colonies, forms an important feature in the consideration of the question of duties. The description given in the Report is, that “ it is
“ more soft, less durable, and every description
“ of it more liable, though in different degrees, to
“ the dry rot, than Timber the produce of the North
“ of Europe:”—that “ the timber of Canada
“ (both Oak and Fir) does not possess, for the
“ purpose of Ship-building, more than one half the
“ durability of wood of the same description the
“ produce of the North of Europe ; that it is particularly liable to the growth of fungi, that species
“ of vegetation which is the forerunner of dry-rot ;
“ and that it has been observed, by professional
“ men, that in most instances, where American
“ Timber has been brought in contact with that
“ of this or any other country, it has even had the
“ effect of destroying that which was in union
“ with it. The result of its application to other
“ purposes of building, is described by Timber
“ Merchants and Carpenters to be nearly similar.

" The Canada Pine is, however, preferable for
 " its size to any other for Bowsprits and Masts,
 " when made of single sticks ; for which purpose
 " it can be employed, without the same injurious
 " consequences which might attend its being in-
 " troduced into the fabric of the ship. And it
 " appears to be used with advantage where masts
 " are made of many parts, in those which are
 " called the Spindle and the Cheeks. The soft
 " white Timber is stated also to be preferable to
 " any other Timber for packing-cases, carving,
 " mouldings, musical instruments, blinds, and other
 " objects, where lightness and freedom from knots
 " is desirable."

For a moment admitting that this is a correct
 description of the relative qualities of the two sorts
 of timber, what more can the Baltic Merchants
 require, than that the North Americans should be
 left to their fate ? The cost of Canada Timber in
 the Colonies is 11. 5s. per load ; that of Swedish
 Timber in Sweden is also 11. 5s. per load : the
 freight of the former 3l. of the latter 19s. Under
 such disadvantages, if there really does exist this
 great difference in value, the Canada Timber must,
 inevitably, be driven out of the market.

The fact, however, seems to be, that though
 in the state in which the North American Timber
 has been hitherto imported, it is not so well suited

for general purposes in Ship-building (which circumstance secures to the Baltic Merchant a certain and extensive demand for his commodity), it serves for numerous other purposes to the full as well, if not better, than the Baltic Timber ; such as shelves, packing-cases, pannelling, doors, shutters, cupboards, picture-frames, window-blinds, carving, moulding, and wherever a large surface is required.

The Canada *red Pine* is approved for Ships' decks ; and the yellow Pine is occasionally used for that purpose : and their Lordships observe (see page 6), that " in Ship-building it has been more " employed than formerly."

The uses above enumerated require a great quantity of Timber ; and, upon enquiry, it will be found, that not less a quantity than a hundred cargoes of inferior and old Timber is consumed annually in London and the suburbs, as fire-wood alone.

In minor buildings, of almost every description, very little but cheap timber is used : and to the cheapness produced by the importations from North America may be attributed the number of cottages and small houses which have been built of late years, to the great comfort of the middling and poorer classes, and the improvement of the health of the community.

The Merchants trading with the Colonies, indeed, are most unhappily situated ; for whilst it is contended that their Timber is so bad in quality that it ought not to be allowed to come at all, it is at the same time urged, that the demand for it for many necessary purposes is such, that it is as capable of paying duty, as timber from other parts of the world.

But whatever may be its demerits, this country finds uses for it to the extent of many thousand loads annually.

There is one circumstance which seems entirely to have escaped notice in the Report of the Committee, which is, that the masts brought annually from North America (amounting, upon an average of the last five years, to 11,484,) require, in their conveyance to this country, to be stowed with smaller timber ; in fact, the one cannot safely come without the other : now as Sir Robert Seppings admits that "Trees of the dimensions necessary for Masts and Bowsprits are not to be produced (as he believes) in any other part of the world than Canada, and that all the larger Yards are made of Canada Timber," how, it may be asked, are these Masts and Yards to be obtained, if the importers are not to be allowed to bring the Timber necessary for their stowage,

except upon terms which must subject them to a heavy loss upon that part of the cargo?

But after all, is it so certain that the North American Timber is of that inferior quality which Sir R. Seppings, Mr. Alexander Copland, and others of the numerous witnesses examined on that side of the question ascribe to it?

In Canada the houses are built of the yellow Pine of the country, and they last for upwards of a century, of which the churches of Quebec and Montreal are striking instances. The opinion of Sir R. Seppings, that Canadian Timber (both Oak and Fir) does not possess more than one half the durability of similar wood of the growth of the North of Europe, appears to be founded upon a comparison of a certain number of Frigates, built with Fir of the two descriptions, of which an account is given (*page 76*): an important fact is, however, stated in a *Nota-Bene* to the account (which appears to have been overlooked), that the Ships built with Baltic Timber were constructed in the "*King's Yards*;" and those of Canada Timber in "*Merchants' Yards*;" to which might have been added, that the latter were built in great haste, upon an emergency, and of *unseasoned* wood. There is, also, one solitary admission in this "*Nota-Bene*" in favour of Canada Timber, which deserves to be brought a little more into

notice than is done in the Report ; that “ in point of tenacity, the red Pine of Canada is superior to the Riga Timber :” * upon this observation of Sir R. Seppings, and similar admissions which at times escaped the merchants, and others deeply interested in suppressing the North American Timber Trade, an opinion may be formed, that when the Canada trade shall become regular and thoroughly understood, the preference always given to timber of superior quality, will induce a selection of the best sorts, and lead to such improvements in the manner of treating it, as eventually to remove the prejudice which the various circumstances to which a new trade is always liable, have tended to produce. When Baltic Deals were first introduced into this country, there was a prejudice against them, as compared with Norway Deals, similar to that which now prevails against the timber of North America ; and which is not even yet removed, as is shewn in the relative difference in the prices.

* In the late contracts with the Navy Board, the contractors have the option of delivering Memel, or Canada Red Pine, at the same price.

CHAPTER IX.

DISSENT has already been expressed from the conclusions of the Committee, "that there is reason
"to expect that the increased supply of Timber
"from the North of Europe would be chiefly im-
"ported in British vessels:" let us now enquire how far their Lordships' observation is well founded, that "it appears, by the concurrent testimony of
"the best-informed persons, that the rate of freight,
"and other circumstances attendant on British
"Shipping, enable it to enter into a successful
"competition with that of every other country on
"the globe."

This is either a most important and gratifying truth, or the adoption of it as such, by their Lordships, is a most fatal error, not only from the influence it may have on the decision of the Legislature, in the question of the Timber Duties, but as it may be taken as the ground-work of those relaxations of the Navigation Laws, which, with the view of giving facilities to foreign commerce, are understood to be in contemplation.

The witnesses, upon whose evidence their Lordships appear to have relied in this matter so implicitly, as hardly to have deemed it necessary to put a question upon the subject to any British Ship Owner, are, Mr. George Norman, Mr. E. Solly, and Mr. J. H. Pelly; and certainly, if it were judged proper to obtain and adopt the opinions and views of gentlemen deeply interested in the trade with the North of Europe, but wholly uninterested in British Shipping, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have selected persons of greater respectability.

The chief part of the statements of these gentlemen on the subject are as follows: Mr. Norman states (*page 11*), that "the fact is, more than one-third of the Ships engaged in the trade to Norway are British: two-thirds or more are British of those engaged in the trade to the Baltic Ports."

And, in *page 12*, he says, "I conceive that the increase of British Ships is going on, because they sail cheaper than others; and because Foreign Ships wear out: but I should presume, in whatever ships they could bring the produce the cheapest, they would bring it in those ships."

To a question whether, "supposing the ships in

“ both cases to be now built for the trade, he
 “ thinks that British-built ships would be cheaper
 “ than Foreign ?” Mr. Norman answers, “ I do
 “ decidedly.”

In *page 17*, Mr. E. Solly says, that “ Timber
 “ from the North is principally imported in British
 “ vessels ; and that, if an increased importation
 “ of Timber from the Northern ports were to
 “ take place, in consequence of a remission of
 “ duty, or any other cause, he is of opinion, that
 “ it would be principally in British vessels.”

The grounds of this opinion are stated at length
 in the following terms :

“ I was formerly a considerable owner of Prus-
 “ sian ships, and, therefore, I had a good deal
 “ of experience in Prussian shipping, and I can
 “ safely say, that Prussian ships cannot compete
 “ with English ships in time of peace ; the English
 “ ships are navigated cheaper than Prussian
 “ ships ; the Prussian vessels are more heavily
 “ masted and rigged, and require a greater com-
 “ plement of men, whilst the English ship is
 “ manned, mostly, by apprentices ; the English
 “ ships require less ballast, the economy of ship-
 “ ping is better understood and practised ; there
 “ is greater activity of the captain and crew ;
 “ they are insured in clubs, and the rate of In-

" surance in clubs is, on the average, five per
 " cent., while the Prussian ships cannot get the
 " same insurance done for twelve ; what I mean
 " by clubs is, that they insure one another ; and,
 " as to the outfit, the provisions and other ne-
 " cessaries for the ship, both have their choice
 " where they will lay in their stock, whether in a
 " Prussian or an English port ; if provisions are
 " cheaper in the Prussian port, the English cap-
 " tain lays in his stock of provisions there ; and
 " to make the advantage sure to the English ships,
 " the duty in the Prussian ship is at the rate of
 " fifteen per cent. on the freight ; it is 3s. 8d. per
 " load higher in a Prussian ship than in an Eng-
 " lish ship ; the charges of all kinds, even the
 " ballast, is charged higher to a Prussian ship than
 " to an English ship."

Mr. Solly adds, that "*he cannot speak from*
 " *experience*, but is of opinion, that British ships
 " generally, can sail cheaper than those of any
 " other nation, except that the materials of British
 " ships are taxed so much higher ; for the duty on
 " the materials for Ship-building *is about one hun-*
 " *dred per cent. of the cost.* That is a ground
 " why the ships of other nations may in some
 " cases compete with the English."

Mr. J. H. Pelly states, " that generally speak-
 " ing, Norway Timber has principally been im-

“ ported in Norwegian ships ; but in peace he
 “ thinks this could not be the case: that the Nor-
 “ wegian ships are wearing out fast, and he feels
 “ sure that British shipping, upon the presumption
 “ that they get a freight which pays them from
 “ Canada, can sail as cheap, if not cheaper, than
 “ Norwegian ships.”

It is impossible here to avoid remarking, that if the ascertaining the actual condition of British shipping in those particulars, in which these gentlemen have given this speculative evidence, was felt to be important, how unfortunate it is, that the Committee should have relied on the testimony of persons who, having no interest whatever in British shipping, could not, of course, be possessed of any *practical experience* in respect to it. The “ best-informed persons,” competent to shew the real state of British shipping in these trades, would seem to be, the owners of the ships themselves ; but of this class of persons, deeply as they are interested in the discussion, not one was examined by the Committee—only one British Ship-owner was examined at all ; and that respectable individual, as he himself stated to the Committee, not concerned in the shipping trading to the North of Europe, or to North America.

Surely it is not in this manner that judgments are to be formed and acted upon, on questions of the

highest national importance. The consequences of relying on testimony so manifestly incompetent, will be best appreciated, however, by an examination of the evidence itself.

It is broadly stated, that British ships can sail cheaper than Foreign. Now it so happened, that shortly after the evidence before their Lordships was closed, some inquisitive gentlemen went on board a Prussian ship, lying in the Thames, having then recently arrived with wood from Prussia, the Captain of which, in answer to two distinct heads of enquiry, which they addressed to him, informed them,—that his seamen's wages were about 27s. sterling per man per month; and that the victualling of his crew averaged about 6d. per man per day.

Let this be compared with the same heads of expenditure in British ships:—in them, the wages of seamen in the Baltic Trade are 50s. per man per month;—and the cost of victualling, averages from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per man per day.*

* Mr. Solly says, that the British Ship-owner has, as well as the Prussian, the choice of ports for making his outfit:—this is a mistake: the British Ship-owner necessarily fits out his ship in his own country, from which he departs: the cheapness of provisions at the port he goes to, is but a

These are two tolerably large items in the expenditure of Shipping, and they, at least, are not in favour of the British Ship-owners.

The other principal expenses of Shipping, consist in Outfit and Port Charges.

Are Cordage, Canvas, Timber, Iron, or any of the important articles consumed in the outfit of a Ship, cheaper in England (loaded as they are with duties) than in the North of Europe? Is labour cheaper in this Country? Upon what, then, are such statements founded?

As to Port Charges; they are, in our own Ports, less for British Ships than for Foreign;—abroad, they very naturally return us the compliment, and there, these charges are, in their turn, higher for British Ships than for their own.

partial advantage to him, available only during a portion of his voyage. If he buys any materials abroad, the moment the ship arrives in this country, the duty upon them is levied; and, if he attempts to repair his ship abroad, to any serious extent, excepting in case of accident, he loses his British register. It is also well known, that foreign seamen are content with a much inferior description of provisions, than that which is indispensable in British ships; and hence arises, in part, that great difference in the expense of victualling, which has been pointed out.

Again ;—as to the *building* of ships ;—Mr. Norman is of opinion, that British ships can be built cheaper than Foreign: this gentleman is incapable of making a wilful mis-statement, but in his earnestness to redeem that capital so unfortunately locked up in Norway, he has undertaken to speak of that of which he is evidently ignorant. His pursuits, as a merchant, do not lead him to have any thing to do with Ship-building :—the fact is, that in the North of Europe, ships can be built, at this moment, at from one half, to two-thirds, less than in this country. No argument is necessary to prove this assertion, after what has been already shewn, as to the comparative expenses of the two countries, and especially, when Mr. Solly tells us, that “ the duty on the materials for Ship-building is “ about one hundred per cent of the cost.”

And now let us go to those particulars which, without even a practical knowledge of the management of British shipping, these gentlemen might have been expected to have shown themselves more accurately informed upon.

Their statements and opinions do certainly lead to the conclusion, that British ships are rapidly superseding those of Norway and the ports of the Baltic ; but behold the real state of the case, as disclosed by the official account annexed to the

Report, *page 121*, from which the following is an extract !

State of the NORWAY Trade for the last Three Years.

	British. Tons.	Foreign. Tons,
Arrived in 1817,	22,580	52,713
1818,	21,996	85,984
1819,	17,087	82,689

Instead, therefore, of a proportion of more than one-third, it appears that only about one-fifth of the ships employed last year were British ; and that the Norwegians are gradually superseding them.

State of the PRUSSIAN Trade for the last Three Years.

	British. Tons.	Foreign. Tons.
Arrived in 1817,	104,709	48,837
1818,	129,742	117,492
1819,	80,258	78,266

Here the progressive increase of Foreign Shipping over British, is even more strongly apparent than in the case of Norway ;—and all this, too, be it remembered, takes place, notwithstanding the difference of duty against Foreign shipping.

To the assertion that Prussian Ships require a greater complement of men than British, it is

only necessary to oppose the following official account.

(*Appendix, page 124.*)

Arrived from PRUSSIA in 1819.

Tons.	Men.
80,258	3,911 British;
78,266	3,430 Foreign.]

The average, therefore, was five men for every 100 tons of the British ships; and four and a half for every 100 tons of the Foreign: what may have been the relative proportion of apprentices included therein, does not appear; but, as British vessels in this Trade are not, as in the case of the West India Trade and Fisheries, required to have a certain number of apprentices, there seems no reason why they should take more than Foreign ships.

The obvious inference to be drawn from the foregoing facts, is supported by the evidence of Mr. J. W. Buckle, Chairman of the Ship Owners' Society, who being asked "whether, in point of fact, the ships employed in trade by the Northern powers of Europe are renewed, or are likely to be renewed, as fast as they decay; or whether the number of them, so employed, is likely to be diminished?" answered, "I am not, of my own knowledge, able to give the Com-

“ mittee any information upon that point ; looking,
 “ however, at the *comparative heavy expenses* at
 “ which British ships are sailing, I cannot doubt
 “ but that they (the Foreign ships) will be re-
 “ newed.” And, being asked whether, “ if the
 “ causes which operate to occasion the present
 “ depression in the freight of British Ships, are
 “ likely to cease ; and whether, if they should
 “ continue, the surplus tonnage when worn out,
 “ would be replaced at the present rates of freight?”
 Mr. Buckle answered, “ I should certainly think
 “ not ;” an opinion in which it is conceived he
 will be joined by every British Ship-owner and
 Ship-builder in Great Britain, and which the present
 inactive state of the Ship-builders throughout the
 kingdom abundantly confirms.

CHAPTER X.

HAVING offered such reflections as have occurred upon the conclusions which their Lordships have drawn from the Evidence annexed to the Report, and shewn that very different inferences are deducible from that Evidence, and that the remedy proposed for the inconveniences of which the Norway and Baltic merchants complain, is not to be thereby obtained, without a great sacrifice of British interests, both national and individual; some observations will now be offered on that part of the Evidence upon which the Committee appear to have placed implicit reliance.

The chief part of the witnesses, it will be seen, are personally most deeply interested in the result of their Lordships' deliberations.

One gentleman (*page 14*), explaining how the debt of one hundred thousand pounds due by Norwegians to his house, arose, says, "a great deal, undoubtedly, was from advances on account of goods, some years back: under the License

“ system, every ship was obliged to take out
 “ goods equivalent to her cargo ; that was the
 “ time when great advances were made.”

Another says (*page 32*), “ when I came into the
 “ house, four years and a half ago, there was a
 “ debt of nearly £100,000 due, the *amount has*
 “ *not been increased since.*” And again (*page 30*),
 “ I look upon it we shall lose the whole of the
 “ money unless some relief be afforded ; we have
 “ very considerable mortgages upon their landed
 “ Estates, and upon their Woods, and, unless we
 “ are enabled to bring them home, in some shape
 “ or other, the money must be lost.

On reading the depositions of these gentlemen, it is strikingly manifest, that they have formed their opinions from their own particular situations and concern in the Trade ; and, further, that instead of being the “ best-informed persons,” they are unaccountably misinformed upon some important points. It seems the more necessary to invite particular attention to this part of the subject, the witnesses called on their side of the question being eleven in number, whose evidence, verbal and documentary, occupies no less than sixty-seven pages ; whilst, on the side of the British Colonies, and British Ship Owners, and Ship Builders, and, it may be added, British Landed Interest also, only

five witnesses were examined, whose evidence and documents occupy about twenty three pages.

Mr. Norman, speaking of the diminished importation of wood from Norway, states (*page 11*), that "during the last five or six years it has decreased very much, and the last year it has amounted to very little." And again (*page 15*), "I should think there would not be a quarter of the duty paid this year, that was paid the last, the trade is come to a stop."

The statements of Mr. J. H. Pelly are to the same effect: (*page 27*) "the trade between this Country and Norway has been diminishing, and at present there is little or nothing doing; it is almost in a state of stagnation." "No consumption of British manufactures can take place in Norway, while the duties are such as to impede the importation of Timber from that Country."

And Mr. W. Charlton represents the export of Oak and Fir from the Baltic, to "be diminished from one half to one-third." (*Page 50.*)

As the representations of a diminution in the British Trade with the North of Europe, arising from the effects of the duties imposed subsequently to the year 1808, are so completely disproved by the

official accounts of the actual quantities of manufactures exported, and Timber imported, (as particularly pointed out in *page 30*), the only way of accounting for the mistakes into which the witnesses have fallen, seems to be, that having allowed their foreign correspondents to get deeply into their debt, the one party has ceased to consign Timber, and the other to ship Manufactures, whereby that sensible diminution in their commercial transactions has taken place, which they have imagined to extend to the trade at large.

Desirable as it is, that these gentlemen may be enabled, eventually to extricate themselves from their unpleasant situation, it never can be contended, that a deep and irreparable injury should be done to the nation at large, for the purpose of accelerating that event.

CHAPTER XI.

HAVING adverted to the general considerations of the Committee "on the regulation of the Timber Trade," some remarks will now be offered upon their Lordships' concluding suggestion, that the duty upon *Deals* should be charged by a *graduated scale*, according to the cubical contents.

The grounds of this suggestion are stated to be, that "the same duty having been imposed in Great Britain on Deals from 8 to 20 feet, while in Ireland the Deals are divided into five classes, the lowest of which was from 8 to 12 feet, the Norway Deals, which are of small dimensions, have laboured under an unfair disadvantage in the British market."

In examining this question, it may not be unsuitable to advert to the probable grounds of policy which have, so long as duties on Deals have been known at all in this country, regulated the mode of charging the duty upon them.

The Norway Deals average, as appears by the Report of the Commissioners of Customs (*Appendix, page 28*), 12 feet in length, while those from Russia and Prussia average 16 feet.

Norway is so much nearer to this Country than the Baltic Ports, and the freight, consequently, so much lower, that it is only by the circumstance of the duty being the same on 16 feet Deals, as on 12 feet Deals, that the Russia and Prussia Deals are enabled to compete in the Market with those of Norway. By this means the Trade is divided between the different countries ; a fair competition is kept up, and the British Importer has a choice of markets to go to for his purchases ; but let the Trade be so regulated, as to give one country a monopoly of it, and the consequences are easily to be foreseen.

The result has well corresponded with what is assumed to have been the principle of this policy : for, appealing once more to “ experience, and the evidence of facts,” in preference to theoretic speculations, we will look to the *actual import* to see, whether the Norway Deals do really “ labour under “ an unfair disadvantage in the British Market.”

By the Official Returns it appears, that on an average of the last four years, the Imports of Deals from all parts have been as follow :

Hundreds of 120 Pieces.

From	Deals.	Deal-Ends.	Battens.	Total.
Norway.....	7,065	3,883	2,331	13,279
Sweden.....	3,941	1,128	414	5,483
Russia	8,115	2,638	1,271	12,024
Prussia	2,686	1,002	16	3,704
Total	21,807	8,651	4,032	34,490

Hundreds of 120 Pieces.

From	Deals and Deal-Ends.	Battens.	Total.
British North American Colonies	5,357	223	5,580

This short statement (which does not include "paling boards") is an answer at once to the assertion, that Norway is not well used; as it shews that she enjoys her full share of the Trade, in comparison with other countries. Doubtless, the Norway Merchants would like to have the whole of it; and then, in a few years, we should have to pay them their own prices, as we were obliged to do during the war; for so dependent upon them did they find us for Deals, that, year after year, they kept raising their prices; and the Government duties in Norway on the Export of Wood from that Country, were increased six-fold.

Experience also furnishes us with satisfactory evidence of the result of the "*graduated scale*" of duties. It has existed now in Ireland some



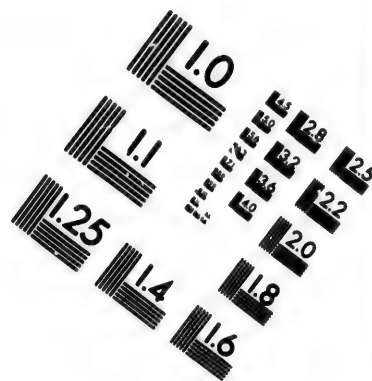
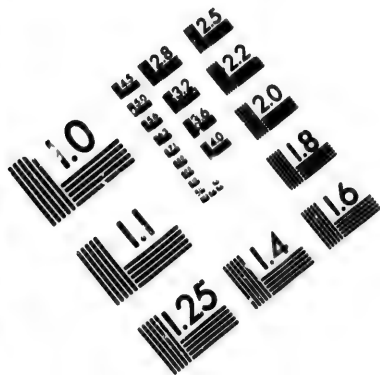
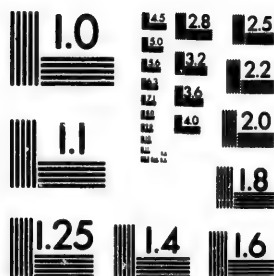


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years, and there the effect has been, almost wholly to exclude Russia and Prussia Deals; the only importations of Deals from those countries into Ireland, consisting of small occasional parcels, shipped merely for the purpose of making up the cargoes of other goods.

It will now be proper to shew, *why* it is that the "graduated scale" must, of necessity, throw the whole of the Trade into the hands of Norway.

The statement* No. 1, shews, by the evidence of a Norway Importer, that at present, Norway Deals leave for their prime cost on board, per 120 pieces of 12 feet, 3 inch by 9 inch, £10.

* No. 1.—*Norway Trade under the existing System.*—
Page 29.

Selling price of a hundred of Norway Deals, viz.

120 pieces of 12 feet 3 in. 9 in.	£38 0 0
Freight	£4 0 0
Commission and Charges 2 10 0	
Duty in a Foreign Ship 21 10 0	
	28 0 0
Balance for prime cost on board	£10 0 0

The statement* No. 2, shews, that by the "graduated scale," there would be left, for prime cost of the same quantity, 18l. 11s. 6d.

The statement† No. 3, shews, that the Russia and Prussia Deals, supposing them to be imported of the average dimensions (reported by the Commissioners of Customs), leave for prime cost, of the same quantity, only 5l. 6s. 9d.; and, to carry

* No. 2.—*Norway Trade, by a "graduated scale," as recommended.*

Selling price of a hundred of Norway Deals, of		
120 pieces of 12 feet 3 in. 9 in.	£38	0 0
Freight	£4	0 0
Commission and Charges	2	10 0
Duty in a Foreign Ship	12	18 6
		19 8 6
Balance for prime cost on board	£18	11 6

† No. 3.—*Baltic Trade, under the "existing system."*

Petersburg Deals, 120 pieces 16 feet 3 in. 10 in.		
(the average dimensions according to the Report		
of the Commissioners of Customs,) contain 2hd.		
1qr. 21ps. standard hundred of 120 pieces, 12		
feet 1½ in. 11 in. which, at 18l. give		£43 13 0
Freight from Petersburg	£11	9 2
Commission and Charges	3	10 0
Duty in a British Ship	20	15 8
		35 14 10
Balance for prime cost	£7	18 2

Or, per Norway standard hundred of 120 pieces of

12 feet 3 in. 9 in. only	£5	6 9
------------------------------------	----	-----

the argument to its utmost stretch, the statement* No. 4, shews, that even supposing the import from Russia and Prussia to consist wholly of 20 feet Deals, (a thing notoriously impossible,) there is only left for prime cost, of the same quantity, 9l. 1s. 4d.

This result, therefore, is evident ; that for what Norway receives, under the present system, £10, Russia and Prussia receive only 5l. 6s. 9d., looking to their average length of import ; and could not, in the extremest case that can be imagined, receive more than 9l. 1s. 4d.

If the system is to be so changed, that instead of £10, Norway is to receive 18l. 11s. 6d. is not it certain, that in Great Britain, as in Ireland, the trade in Deals with Russia and Prussia must be instantly destroyed ?

* No. 4.—*Baltic Trade under the “existing system.”*

Petersburg Deals, 120 pieces of 20 feet 12 in. 3 in.			
contain 3hd. 1qr. 10ps. standard hundred, of			
120 pieces 12 feet 1½ in. 11 in. being, at 18l.			
per hundred,			£60 0 0
Freight from Petersburg ..	15	15	0
Commission and Charges..	5	0	0
Duty in a British Ship ..	20	15	8
			41 10 8
Balance for prime cost			£18 9 4
Or, per Norway standard hundred of 120 pieces			
of 12 feet 3 in. 9 in. only			
			£9 1 4

As to Deals from Canada, it will be seen by the statement No. 5,* that they now leave for prime cost, of the same quantity, as the average of the Norway Deals, 4l. 11s. 3d. ; so that, as regards Canada, any Act of Parliament, for a graduated scale of duties, might as well be called at once, "An Act to prohibit the cutting of Deals in Canada."

All these statements are taken from data furnished by the evidence, and, consequently, the freights, all the way through, are those of 1819.

The Committee have not, in their Report, adverted to one great advantage which Norway enjoys by the present system, viz. the being permitted to import 8 feet Deals as *Deal Ends*, at a duty of only 7l. 1s. 9d. per 120 ; while those

* No. 5.—*Canada Trade under the "existing system."*

Quebec Deals, 120 pieces of 12 feet 3 in. 11 in.			
contain 2hd. standard hundred of 120 pieces,			
12 feet 1½ in. 11 in. which, at 14l. per hd.			
give	.. .. .	£28	0 0
Freight	.. .. .	£19	8 6
Commission and Charges	3 0 0		
		<u>22</u>	<u>8 6</u>
Balance for prime cost	.. .. .	£ 5	11 6
Or, per Norway standard hundred of 120 pieces			
of 12 feet 3 in. 9 in. only	.. .. .	£4	11 3

from 8 to 20 feet pay 20l. 15s. 8d.: Of this advantage the Norwegians have not been backward to avail themselves, it being found that more than one-third of the whole quantity imported from Norway, in the last three years, have been admitted to entry as Deal Ends.

Some very elaborate calculations are contained in a paper laid before the Committee, *page 93*, by the respectable proprietor of a Saw Mill at Leith, who finding it unprofitable, comes to the Committee to tell them, that if they will be so good as to take off part of the duty on Timber (that it may come only in *the log*), and will double the duty on Deals (that they may not come at all), there will be no want of grist to his mill.

This Gentleman states, broadly, in his evidence, that he erected his Saw-mill “upon the faith that the duties would exist as then settled;” and that because such has not been the case, it has been found unproductive: in other words, that the system of duties favours the import of Deals, and discourages that of Timber in the log, to the great prejudice of British Saw-mills.

It is vulgarly said, that “one fact is worth a bushel of arguments.” If this witness had but introduced into his very long paper, a short statement of the *actual comparative import* of these two species

of Wood, during the period he speaks of, how much more convincing would it have been, than that vast assemblage of figures which he has brought before the Committee: as he has not done this, it may throw a little light on the subject, if we just take the trouble to see what may be learnt from such a statement. The following is an account, extracted from the Official Returns, of

Four yearly averages of the quantity of Timber and Deals imported into Great Britain in the last 20 years, viz.

TIMBER.

From 1799 to 1802	176,864 Loads.
1811 to 1815	211,323
1816 to 1819	281,978

DEALS, &c.

	Deals.	Deal-Ends.	Battens.	Total.
1799 to 1802 ..	40,962	4,289	5,225	50,476
1811 to 1815 ..	30,297	6,800	3,017	40,114
1816 to 1819 ..	27,181	8,653	4,257	40,091

Now what commentary is thus furnished upon the evidence of this witness? Where is the alarming increase in the import of Deals over that of the logs of Timber? How happens it, on the contrary, that in the face of all the reasoning contained in his evidence, *precisely the reverse* is the fact; and that the proportional import of Timber *in the log* has been progressively increasing over

that of Deals? That this Gentleman's Saw-mill may not have answered his expectations may be perfectly true; but let some other cause be found for its failure, than that which his imagination has suggested.

The whole bearing of his evidence goes to remonstrate, not so much against the *amount* of the present duties, as against the *way* in which they are charged; and it certainly would lead to the inference, that this way of rating the duty, only came into practice after he had commenced to erect his mill. The truth, however, is, that from the first moment of levying such duties, the same progressive increase has been preserved, upon precisely the same scale that now exists; and the witness could have no right, in the undertaking he was then engaging in, to calculate on any alteration in a scale of so long standing.

One point (highly interesting to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at least,) requires to be distinctly brought to view: Norway Deals now pay duty, in a foreign Ship, 21l. 10s. per 120 pieces:—by the “graduated scale” they would pay only 12l. 18s. 6d. ! The “graduated scale” would throw the import entirely upon Norway Deals; and hence a surrender of just two-fifths of the whole duty is proposed to be made, merely for the accommodation of Norway, and at the farther expense of sacri-

ficing the interests of our Colonies and Shipping;
and the giving great cause for complaint to Russia
and Prussia, who will be at a loss to discover,
upon a view of the state of commercial intercourse
between the respective countries, any ground what-
ever for such exclusive preference of Norway in-
terests.

CHAPTER XII.

IN the foregoing pages enough has been said, it is conceived, to establish the following facts :

1st.—That previous to the competition of the North American Timber Trade, when the duties were not half their present amount, the price of Baltic Timber was higher to the consumer in this country than it is now ; or (with the same competition), than it is likely to become again.

2dly.—That the extension of the Colonial Wood Trade, has been productive of a corresponding increased demand for British Manufactures.

3rdly.—That this trade has afforded support to many thousands of persons who have emigrated from the mother country ; and greatly added to the value and strength of the British possessions in North America.*

4thly.—That it affords employment to many hundreds of British Ships, and to many thousands of British Seamen.

* By recent accounts from Canada to the 21st of November, it appears, that 11,239 Settlers had arrived out in the course of the present year.

5thly.—That these important advantages have not been attended with any material diminution in the consumption of wood imported from countries in the North of Europe : and that so far from our export of manufactures to those countries having declined, in proportion as the trade with the North American Colonies has increased, the amount of such exports has been, of late years, even greater than before the existence of the Colonial Wood Trade.

6thly.—That, notwithstanding the duty payable upon foreign wood, the importers thereof possess, upon the whole, decided advantages in the British market, in the comparatively small expense of importing it, and the very general prejudice still remaining in favour of its quality. And that, notwithstanding the almost exclusive use of Baltic Timber in the King's Yards, and the preference given to it in the construction of buildings of magnitude, the demand for Canada Timber has increased, as its qualities have become known.

7th.—That, therefore, any reduction in the duties on the wood of the North of Europe, would, by placing the North American Timber upon a more unfavourable footing than at present, give to the former such decided advantages, as would certainly and rapidly annihilate the Trade with the British Colonies.

That the inevitable consequences would be, to aggravate the distresses of the British Ship-owner:—to put nearly a total stop to British Ship-building:—to reduce many thousands of our Seamen to the alternative of begging for their bread, or entering into foreign employ:—to check the growing prosperity of the Colonies:—to deprive the mother country of one of the most advantageous means of disposing of her surplus population:—to ruin the Merchants and others who have embarked their capital in Saw-mills, and other local establishments in the Colonies:—to convert the content and loyalty of the Colonists, into the extreme of dissatisfaction:—to leave this country, as formerly, at the mercy of foreigners, for the supply of an article of the first necessity:—to raise the price of wood upon the English consumer:—and to diminish the exports of British goods, and thus aggravate the distress of our manufacturers and merchants.

On the other hand, by affording liberal encouragement to colonization, great relief may be obtained by this country:—the strength and security of the Colonies be increased;—and Canada enabled, a third time, to resist the efforts of the United States; whose sanguine hope of becoming the possessors of our fine provinces, is stimulated by the conviction, that the loss of our Newfoundland Fishery,—of our West India Islands,—and, finally, of our naval superiority, must inevitably follow.

Whether the objects which the Select Committee have in view, be attainable by the measures which their Lordships have recommended; or whether, if attained, they would be worth the sacrifice of interests of such magnitude and importance, it remains for the Legislature to decide.

APPENDIX.

The following Extract from the Quebec Gazette, of the 21st of September last, exhibits the opinions, and at the same time the feelings, of our fellow subjects in the Colonies.

“ THE French War of 1792, gave us an export of Grain
“ to Great Britain ; the shutting of the Baltic gave us the
“ Lumber Trade ; the American Embargo, the American
“ War, and the immense demand which it occasioned for
“ Colonial labour and produce, enabled us to extend our
“ consumption of British Merchandize beyond any former
“ precedent. If our earnings were considerable, very
“ little remained with us. They, for the most part, went
“ to Great Britain. If we built ourselves fine houses,
“ we took special care to cover their roofs with British
“ tin ; to provide ourselves with an abundance of win-
“ dows, which were supplied with the most costly British
“ glass ; outside and inside there was a profusion of
“ British paint ; all our furniture, all our ornaments,
“ must be British. Our meat was roasted on British
“ spits, turned by British jacks, perhaps before a British
“ coal fire, served on British tables, British dishes,
“ British linen, and ate with British knives and forks ;
“ our very bread and pastries were made in British moulds.
“ Our wine came to us only through British channels,

“ was poured out of British double-flint cut decanters, into
“ glasses of the same description ; and we toasted the
“ British King, the British Army and Navy, and went
“ to rest on British Bedsteads, in British sheets and
“ British blankets, and rose up to be covered entirely
“ with British clothing. Even our furs and peltries
“ must be sent home to England to become British.
“ Our books and our paper, and the quills with which
“ we wrote, were British.

“ From the splendid dwelling in our cities, to the log
“ habitation of twelve feet square, where the first settler
“ shews the labour, the privations, and the suffering
“ which must have been endured, to give this goodly
“ country its present cheerful aspect, and moderate de-
“ gree of comfort, all is British ; save our meat and
“ our bread, our fruit and our roots, our stone and our
“ wood, a few articles of coarse clothing made in our
“ families, and some stoves and pots manufactured at
“ the King’s Iron-works at St. Maurice. If all that is
“ British could be taken away from us at once, we should
“ be houseless, naked, and hungry ; our condition would
“ be worse than that of the savage, for he can endure
“ the intemperance of the weather, or build him a hut ;
“ he can snare the beasts of the forest, clothe himself
“ with their skins, and feed himself with their flesh ;
“ he can make himself bows and arrows for his defence,
“ and beat out the brains of his enemies with a war-
“ club. We should, indeed, be in a worse condition
“ than the savage, if it were possible, all at once, to
“ take away from us all that is British, and leave us no
“ substitute. This, however, is not possible. But we
“ shall retrograde to a state worse than that of the

“ savage, in proportion as the supplies we want from
“ Britain and British possessions are taken away ; and
“ they will, in great part, be taken away, or what is the
“ same thing, our stock will wear out, be consumed,
“ and disappear, and not be replaced, if we have not
“ the means of procuring a fresh supply. We all know
“ that we have hitherto been supplied, *in exchange for*
“ *our labour, or the produce of our labour.* The advocates
“ of the new regulations, which are to destroy our lum-
“ ber trade, are about to say to us : You must come to
“ our shop, you must travel in our carriages, and pay us
“ for conveyance ; you must buy our goods, or want :
“ We have now no longer occasion for any thing that
“ you can supply us with. Here are our neighbours, the
“ French, the Germans, the Poles, who can furnish us with
“ grain almost for nothing ; here is Prussia, and Sweden,
“ and Denmark, all our neighbours and true friends,
“ they will sell us much better lumber than yours at half
“ price ; really we do not want any thing that you can
“ offer us ; but, recollect, take care that you do not sell
“ or carry your produce to any one else ; recollect, that
“ you must buy at our shop or go without.”

Discussion in the House of Commons, on the 22d of May, 1810, upon the introduction of the Bill for increasing the Duty on Foreign Timber. Extracted from Cobbett's Debates, and the Public Journals.

Mr. ROSE moved the order of the day for the House resolving itself into a Committee, to consider of the propriety of increasing the duties on the Importation of Foreign Timber, &c. He then stated to the Committee that the object to which he had to call the attention of the Committee was of very great importance. It was that, by adopting the policy of laying a heavy additional duty on the Timber Imported from the North of Europe, they might encourage the Importation of that essential article from our own Colonies in North America. *The price of Timber in the North of Europe had, within these few years, risen to an enormous extent; no less, indeed, than 200 per cent.* Another disadvantage attending this Trade was, that in the present state of Europe, *the Timber was brought to us, not by British, but by foreign Ships,* and this to such a degree, that he believed there was paid last year, between two and three millions to foreigners alone, for the freightage of Timber imported, to the amount of 358,000 tons. He believed that *one half* of the Timber necessary for our consumption, might be procured from our own Colonies in North America,

which, with the Pines of Canada, would nearly supply the whole ; and, even if it fell short of his expectations, the Country would be compensated for the loss by other advantages. The system now in use *encouraged not only the building of foreign Ships, but the formation of foreign Sailors*, and, by the measure he had now to propose, he trusted a change would be wrought, by which, instead of twice that number of Seamen, trained for *Denmark and Russia, to be employed against us by our enemies*, about 15,000 would be created for ourselves. The measure would besides encourage our Colonies. It would enable them to clear their grounds of Timber, and induce the cultivation of flax, hemp, &c. for our importation. In return, *the Colonies would be enabled to take our manufactures*, instead of our being obliged to send out for our Timber, as we now did, our Ships in ballast. *The principle of his proposition was not new, it was as old as the days of Queen Anne.* He adverted to an extraordinary, and ill-judged assertion, advanced by a noble Lord (Cochrane) on a former night, that there was not Timber enough in Plymouth Dock-yard to build one-half of a seventy-four. He regretted the noble Lord could have been *so* hasty, and recommended him more caution in making such unguarded assertions for the future. The Timber now in Plymouth Dock-yard was out of all proportion greater than that specified by the noble Lord. Upon all these considerations, he trusted the Committee would concur with him in the resolution, "To lay an additional duty on Oak, Wainscot, &c. imported, under any shape, from the North of Europe, and all Timber, imported by the East India Company, or directly from our own Colonies in North America."

Sir W. LEMON said a few words in favour of the resolution.

Mr. HORNER rose to call the earnest attention of the House, not so much to the present resolution, *as to the alarming increase of foreign Shipping in our trade*, incidentally brought under their eye on this occasion. The Right Hon. Gentleman had stated, that last year, for the freightage of Timber alone, to the amount of 380,000 tons, this Country had paid to foreigners the sum of from two to three millions; and, on a former evening, a Gentleman well acquainted with the Trade, on the subject of the Marine Insurance, had informed them, that not less than ten millions was paid the same year, for the whole of that species of traffic. *This he considered as an alarming increase of foreign Shipping, entirely subversive of our maritime system.* He again entreated the House to take into their serious consideration, this new growing evil, which, in his opinion, arose from out of the mercantile system, so much the favourite of the Right Hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer). Of this system, so persevered in, Buonaparte might be taking the advantage; and, like Cromwell, who, by diverting the trade from the Dutch, became the carrier and first maritime power of Europe, he might be deluding our Government, by pretending a total disregard to commerce, while, in fact, even in the midst of war, by our own connivance, he was creating Seamen to man his fleets against us: for he could, at any time, transfer to his service, the men thus employed in a neutral trade, of powers immediately under his controul. If he exercised his genius, as he was well able to do in

this way, he would be playing a deep game, and deluding us, by taking advantage of our own policy.

Mr. ROSK, in reply, stated, that so far from encouraging foreign Shipping, the Board of Trade never, in one instance, swerved from this principle;—never to permit a foreign Ship to go where a British Ship could be employed. The Hon. Gentleman talked of their being deluded; but how was this? it was by the strong hand of Buonaparte, which procured the exclusion of British Shipping from the ports of the North of Europe. The question then was, whether, by accepting of neutral carriage, where no other could be used, they were to carry on an important Trade; or, by rejecting this means, were to shut the door on their Exports, and starve their Manufacturers. It was a consolation to know, that under all the disadvantages imposed by the enemy, our own Shipping had increased in value. As a proof of this, he instanced a Vessel, bought three years ago for 2700*l.* now selling for 6000*l.*

Mr. D. GIDDY considered it as a matter of general policy, *to encourage Trade with our own Colonies.* The argument of Buonaparte's treading in the steps of Cromwell, was an additional reason for approving of the proposed measure. He had heard, however, that the Timber from North America was not adequate for our national purposes; and, also, that the quantity could not be so great as the Right Hon. Gentleman expected, or the uses of the country required.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in order to re-

move the despondency which the learned Gentleman seemed so disposed to indulge in, respecting the excess of the foreign Shipping Trade over ours, entered into the following statement of the number of British and Foreign Ships, which had cleared inwards for the years 1807 and 1809.

British Ships entered inwards for the year 1807 ..	8,590
British Ships entered inwards for the year 1809 ..	10,173
Increase of British Ships entered inwards from the year 1807 to 1809.. .. .	1,583
Foreign Ships entered inwards for the year 1807	3,712
Foreign Ships entered inwards for the year 1809	4,692
Increase of Foreign Ships entered inwards from 1807 to 1809	980
British Ships cleared outwards for the year 1807	8,924
British Ships cleared outwards for the year 1809	9,935
Increase of British Ships cleared outwards from 1807 to 1809	1,011
Foreign Ships cleared outwards for the year 1807	3,630
Foreign Ships cleared outwards for the year 1809	4,379
Increase of Foreign Ships cleared outwards from the year 1807 to 1809	749

From this statement it appeared, that with respect to the Ships entered inwards, the increase of the British

Shipping, above that of the foreign Shipping, from 1807 to 1809, amounted to 603 ; and, with respect to the Ships entered outwards in the same period, the increase of the British Shipping over those of the Foreign Shipping, amounted to 262 : so that, instead of the British Shipping having given way to the Foreign Shipping, they were in the gross amount, for the same period, above them, 865 Ships.

Mr. TREMAYNE was apprehensive that the American Timber was not fit for all the purposes to which this country would wish to apply her Importations of that article, and we would, therefore, be at a loss for our necessary supplies, were a heavy duty, amounting to a prohibition, to be laid on that procured from the North of Europe.

Mr. BARING objected to the system of Trade favoured by Ministers, *as tending to prefer the northern neutrals, which were, in reality, our enemies*, to the American Shipping, in the Trade of Norway and the Baltic. That Trade might be much better carried on under the American flag ; but for this really neutral power, had been substituted pretended neutrals, who might be instantly converted into enemies ; and we were, consequently, by this course, enriching a part of the world it was least our interest to enrich. This was the great error of the present System, the encouragement of the Northern Powers instead of America. With regard to the measure itself, he feared our Colonies would neither produce a sufficient quantity of Timber, nor that of sufficient quality. It would, besides, give the Western part of the Kingdom

an advantage over the Eastern, as the former would be supplied from America, and the latter from the Baltic. It would also increase the price of a necessary article already enormously high. *The object was, however, a great one*, and the experiment might, perhaps, deserve to be tried.

*To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.*

The Humble Petition of the undersigned Ship Owners
of London,

SHEWETH,

THAT the attention of your petitioners has been attracted to a petition which has been lately presented to your Honourable House by certain Merchants of this city, praying for a revision of the commercial system established by the existing restrictive and revenue laws.

That the said petitioners declaring the prayer of their said petition to be "against every restrictive regulation of trade not essential to the revenue, and against all duties merely protective from foreign competition," your petitioners cannot contemplate without anxiety the possible admission of a principle, which recognizes the advantage of the revenue alone as the guide in framing our commercial code, overlooking the claims to protection which your petitioners humbly conceive those numerous classes of the community to possess whose capitals have been embarked in trades, which being considered of importance to the security and greatness of the country, have been protected and have flourished under the existing system, and must still depend for their prosperity upon its permanence.

That, understanding one of the chief objects which the said petitioners seek to obtain is a relaxation of the navigation laws, your petitioners would earnestly implore your Honourable House to pause ere it sanction an alteration in our maritime code, and to weigh well the consequences of a departure from that policy under which our commercial marine has attained to unexampled prosperity, and our navy to unrivalled power.

Your petitioners entreat of your Honourable House to bear in mind that the experience of more than two centuries has shown the advantage of adhering to a system, which, by encouraging shipping and navigation, has so greatly contributed to the strength and general prosperity of the empire ; and they beg to state to your Honourable House their firm conviction that this system cannot be departed from in any material respect, without a loss of trade in British ships, in proportion to the increase of foreign trade which might be thereby obtained, and the consequent sacrifice of British navigation, and all the important interests dependent thereon.

That your Petitioners, however, would have forborne to approach your Honourable House with this expression of their anxiety, in the confidence that they might safely rely on the wisdom of the Legislature to protect from the risk of unadvised experiment, interests so vast and so truly national as those of British shipping, had they only, as in the case of the proposed alteration of the navigation laws, been menaced with direct attack ; but your petitioners having observed that it is also sought to procure an alteration of the existing duties on timber in favour of

foreign commerce, cannot refrain from declaring to your Honourable House, respectfully, but unhesitatingly, their belief, that such a measure would be fraught, beyond any other change in our existing system that could be devised, with consequences disastrous to the British ship-owner. This danger, the greater as it is the less obvious, they feel themselves peculiarly called upon to point out.

That although the primary motive of the Legislature, in encouraging the importation of timber from the British colonies, might not be the support of the interests of navigation, yet it has proved to be admirably calculated for that object, as will appear by the following statement of the progressive increase of the tonnage employed in that trade, viz. the number of ships cleared out from Great Britain to the British North American colonies was

		Ships.	Tons.	Men.
In the year	1814	576	112,734	6,707
	1815	871	174,575	9,701
	1816	772	160,375	8,821
	1817	1009	194,996	10,370
	1818	1327	288,501	15,108
	1819	1525	340,537	17,634

That this new channel of employment opened most opportunely for the relief of British shipping, at a period of unprecedented depression—the effects of a transition from war to peace having been more severely felt by your petitioners than by any other class of commercial capitalists, from the circumstance, in a great degree, of 900 sail of the largest kind of merchant vessels, employed in the

service of Government during the war, having been thrown at once upon the market, upon the cessation of the transport service.

That in the year 1819 the whole number of British ships that cleared out of the ports of Great Britain, including their repeated voyages, amounted to 19,371, of the burden of 2,254,937 register tons, and navigated by 137,703 men. Of this number, as before mentioned, 1525 ships, of the burden of 340,537 register tons, and navigated by 17,634 men, cleared out for the ports of British North America (almost wholly for the purpose of bringing home timber), *being 1-7th part of the entire carrying trade of the country.*

That the whole of this trade is peculiarly and pre-eminently British, the prime cost of the timber being paid for in British manufactures, and the freight being paid to British ships; so that the entire sum expended for the article in Great Britain goes through British channels, and contributes more or less to the benefit of native interests, and the maintenance of the national revenue.

That, if such alteration be made as would throw our ports more widely open to the timber of the Baltic and Norway, this intercourse, so important to the country generally, and of such vital interest to the ship-owner, would be annihilated, or reduced altogether to insignificance.

That, from the length and difficulty of the voyage, the larger part of the value of timber imported hither from North America consists of *freight.*

That the mere circumstance of the proximity of the northern ports of Europe, by enabling ships to repeat their voyages frequently in the course of the year, would alone reduce the number of British vessels employed in the carrying trade of timber *to one-third of their present amount.*

That this would be the effect, without taking into consideration the influence of foreign competition ; but experience has already shown the difficulty of successfully contending with the ships of the north of Europe in bringing the timber of those countries ; partly from the low rate of their outfit and mode of navigation ; partly from the natural predilection of the foreigners interested in this trade for employing their own vessels.

That, combining both the above-mentioned considerations, namely, the shortness of the voyage, and the competition of foreigners, your petitioners do not fear contradiction in stating their belief, that, for every foreign ship which should be thus employed, *three British ships of equal size would be left unemployed :* and your petitioners have good ground for believing that the ship-owners of the north of Europe (at present in a state of much difficulty) are not the parties looking with the least anxiety to the decision which the British Government may form upon this important question.

That your petitioners would submit to your Honourable House, whether, for the sacrifice of interests so momentous, any advantage, they will not say equivalent, but approaching to equivalent, be held out.

It is contended that the foreign timber thus admitted would enlarge the demand for British manufactures ; the fact, on the contrary, however, is, that the growers and importers of Norwegian and Baltic timber take but a very small proportion of its price in articles of British production : Every cargo imported would come in diminution of the quantities taken from our own colonies, and would divert capital and the powers of capital from the inhabitants of a rising country, all whose wants and habits are formed upon the use of articles exclusively British, to aliens whose consumption of such produce is comparatively partial and trifling.

That your petitioners would further submit to your Honourable House, whether the freight of the timber imported could be more beneficially bestowed for this country than at present ? Of its present large amount, (£1,400,000), almost the whole is consumed in an outfit, of which every article has employed British artisans, and paid heavy duties to the British Exchequer ; the larger portion of the residue pays the wages of British seamen ; for but a very small part goes to form the rate of interest upon the depreciated property of the ship-owner.

That your Petitioners also beg to state, that this trade has peculiar advantages as a nursery for hardy seamen, from the nature both of the climate and the voyage ; the ships employed in it taking an unusual number of apprentices, who, in a few years, become sailors of the most valuable description.

That, in conclusion, your Petitioners earnestly implore

of your Honourable House to reflect what would be the consequence of throwing out of employment almost the whole of theseamen now employed in the North-American Timber trade ; for your Petitioners declare, that they know not where to look for a substitute if this branch of the carrying trade be taken from them, labouring, as they are, under serious difficulties in meeting the rivalry of surrounding States.

Your Petitioners, therefore, entreat your Honourable House, that before any step be taken in a matter so deeply interesting to them, and (as they conceive) so important to the community at large, they may be permitted to prove at the Bar of your Honourable House, the allegations contained in this their humble Petition, which they entertain a perfect confidence they can do to the entire conviction of your Honourable House.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

London, May 16, 1820.

Brougham's "Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers," Vol. 1, p. 174, Ed. 1803.

IN comparing the advantages of long and short voyages Mr. B. says, "Now the long voyage has another and very material advantage. Whether the distant markets be a home or a foreign one; and whether it be more or less remote than twice the distance of the other market, with the profits of which we may compare its returns, it encourages a breed of seamen essentially necessary to every member of the European Commonwealth which would engage in an extensive foreign traffic of any description whatever—I mean the breed of seamen. The Coasting Trade is, indeed, an excellent nursery: but it is in no country sufficient to form a navy, not even in Great Britain, however extensive her sea-coast, and her internal commerce, may be. The commerce of the nearer countries in Europe, however enlarged, although the whole capital of the colonial trade were turned into it, would still be inadequate; and that for the five following seasons." It is not necessary here to quote the whole, however excellent.

"In the first place, a smaller number of sailors could man the vessels, which would be necessary for the same bulk of traffic; consequently, a smaller number would be employed. The owner and master of a vessel in calculating the crew which he may require, considers the length of time during which he is to remain at sea, removed from

all human assistance, and necessarily dependant on his hands : he considers that in a voyage of six or eight weeks, more accidents may happen, and more natural deaths take place among his men, than in a passage of eight or ten days : he remembers, too, that, in the one case, he cannot save himself as in the other, by running into a neighbouring harbour, upon any emergency ; and that the probability of his meeting a friendly vessel in his distress, is so small as not to enter into the calculation. While, therefore, he adapts the strength of his vessel, and the fulness of his stores, to the casualties of his long navigation, he proportions, in like manner, the numbers of his crew ; and the extraordinary profits of the trade, admit of that increased complement and equipment. Although, then, the same number of weeks in a year were actually to be spent at sea, by the vessel engaged in the European, and the vessel engaged in the American Trade, a greater proportion of men would be given, and could be afforded, to the tonnage required in the latter.

“ If we compare the tonnage employed in the distant trade of any of the European nations, with the number of seamen allotted to the management of it, we shall be convinced that the proportion is much greater than in the trade of the neighbourhood. In forming this comparative estimate, however, we must attend to the proportion of Tons in each vessel ; for, by this, the proportion of the crew to the tonnage is almost entirely determined, in voyages of equal duration.

“ The average proportion of seamen in the West India Trade of England, during 1798, 1799, and 1800, was

that of 1 man to 14 tons ; but the vessels measured, at an average, 292 tons each. The vessels trading to France, at an average of 1791 and 1792, were of 81 tons only, and the proportion of seamen was only that of 1 to a little more than 13 tons. As about three and a half times the number of the West India captains must be reckoned in this difference, and they do not increase the number of seamen for the exigencies of the state, it will be found that the West India trade yields, in proportion to its tonnage, somewhat more seamen than the trade with France, although the vessels are between 3 and 4 times as large. The vessels in the Flanders trade have a higher average of tonnage, and a lower proportion of seamen. The proportion of their bulk, to that of the West India vessels, is still very small ; yet they do not furnish by any means so many seamen.

“ But if we take our instance from a traffic in which the bulk of the vessel approaches nearer to that of the West Indiamen, we shall be able more exactly to appreciate the effects of the long voyage. The average tonnage of German traders for 1798, 1799, and 1800, was 165 tons ; the men only one to nineteen tons. The average tonnage of Dutch traders in 1791 and 1792, was 132 tons to a vessel, the men 1 to 19 tons nearly. The Prussian tonnage was 205 to a vessel ; the men 1 to 20³/₄ths. tons : the Russian tonnage 250 ; the men only 1 to 21¹/₄ths. Thus the Baltic trade furnishes less than two-thirds of the seamen supplied by the West India trade, in proportion to the tonnage.

“ But in the third place (page 187), besides increasing the number of seamen more than any other equally ex-

tensive traffic, the colony trade raises a breed of a better quality than the trade which consists of short voyages.

“ In the fourth place (page 189), the colony trade has this very great advantage, in common with the coasting trade, that the sailors which it employs are seldom or never in a foreign port. They are, of consequence, much less exposed to the danger of deserting into Foreign service ; vacancies in their number are more easily, and better filled up, not by foreigners but by other inhabitants of the same country ; and they are always in some part of the empire, where their services may be needed for the military operations of the state. The seamen required for the navy, upon an emergency, cannot be procured from the vessels engaged in a Trade that requires them to remain in a foreign country, in the Gulph of Finland, for example, or in the Levant. In this case Government must wait for their return. For those employed in the colony trade are either in some port of the mother country, or of the colonies ; on both of which stations their services may be required for Ships of War

“ A navy is necessary (page 190), either for the defence of a maritime country, and the military operations which it may carry on against other states ; or for the protection of its commerce. Without the possession of an extensive foreign commerce, indeed, no nation can support a powerful navy, unless it remained in a state of perpetual war, or submits to an expense which none but a commercial nation can sustain. But, like most other political re-agents, the services rendered by the trade and the navy are reciprocal, and the effects of their progressive improvement are mutual.

“ To undervalue a particular branch of commerce, which is calculated to increase the maritime power of the state more directly than the other branches, is surely to take a short-sighted view of this species of force, both to the defence and wealth of the nation. Yet many politicians have denied the importance of those very pursuits which tend to promote naval power ; because, according to them, naval power must always be the consequence, and not the cause, of commercial prosperity. They seem to forget, that commercial prosperity must operate in a particular way, in order to produce this effect ; and that, if its agency is obstructed in that particular direction, the trade and wealth of the nation may flourish, and no navy ever arise from it ; any more than the richness of the soil will raise plentiful crops, if the genial warmth and moisture of the season be withheld, or the natural effects of fertility obstructed by the pressure of an incumbent mass.

“ The establishment of a naval force, then (page 192), is the consequence, no doubt, of commercial improvement. A government would, indeed, be justly blameable which should anticipate this progress, and attempt to lay the foundations of naval power, by ordering a certain number of vessels to be constructed, and draining the coasting trade of hands, in order to man them. But a government would be as blameable if it should discourage that sort of industry, the direct tendency of which is to accelerate the progress of naval power, and should neglect those advantages, which the possession of distant and fertile territories presents for the accomplishment of this object.

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